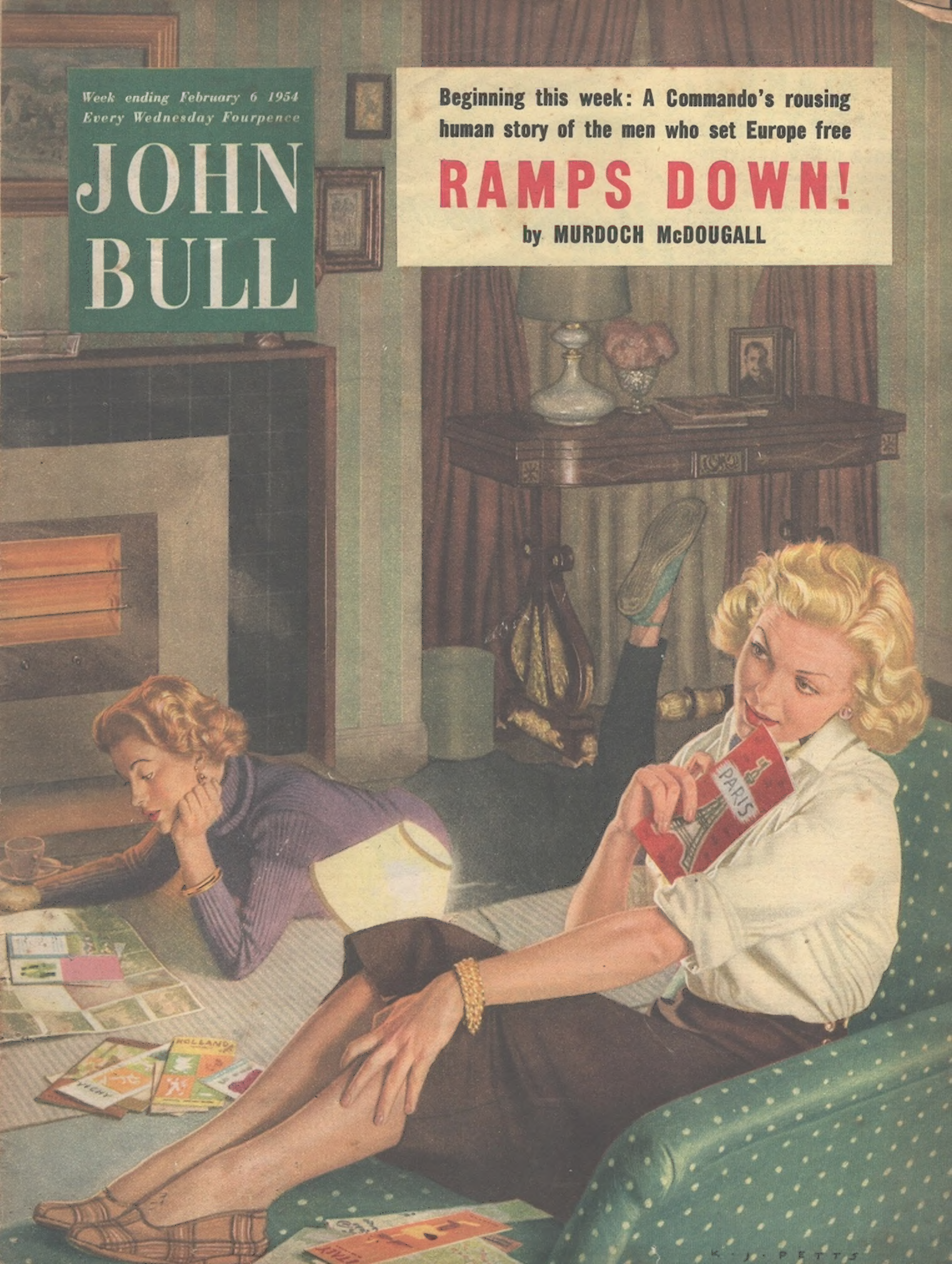
*Week ending February 6 1954*
*Every Wednesday Fourpence*

# JOHN BULL

**Beginning this week: A Commando's rousing human story of the men who set Europe free**

## RAMPS DOWN!

**by MURDOCH McDOUGALL**



# MAKE WRITING YOUR OTHER BUSINESS

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MOST successful Writers did not begin their working lives as Authors. Thousands of Stories and Articles are by people who write in addition to their regular occupations. They write for the deep pleasure of writing; for the security an additional income provides. Writing gives young people another string to the bow; enables retired folk to capitalise their experiences.

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## PRACTICAL RESULTS

*Student* 171/162.—I have sold my story to **EVERYWOMAN** for 25 guineas. *Student* 1106/156.—The **B.B.C.** accepted the script for the Light Programme—fee 9 guineas—after my first lesson! *Student* 141/76.—The article which I wrote for the Second Test Paper appeared in the **SUNDAY MAIL**. Thanks for the recommendation. *Student* 2317/185.—I am pleased to say that my article for Lesson Two has been accepted by the magazine **TRAVEL**. *Student* 2003/1610.—The Course has already borne fruit, for I have sold an article to **PSYCHOLOGY** for 2 guineas. *Student* 1834/152.—. . . together with cheque, which I obtained from the **CHRISTIAN HERALD** for the article which I originally wrote for the Second Test Paper. *Student* 761/2812.—I have just sold my first story to **FAMILY STAR** for 4 guineas, and am I thrilled! *Student* 473/28.—I have had my first short story accepted by the Editor of **HOME REVIEW**. *Student* 1437/217.—. . . on your advice I sent my article with a covering letter to the **LIVERPOOL ECHO** and barely three weeks had elapsed before I had the pleasure of seeing it in print. *Student* 1328/2110.—**GLAMOUR** have paid me 7 guineas for a short story and the **B.B.C.** has accepted a fairy story, to be adapted for the Children's Hour. *Student* 984/227.—I also have to report the sale of a further fairy story to the Co-operative Press, for inclusion in their **SUNSHINE ANNUAL**, payment 2 guineas. *Student* 1518/69.—**MODERN WOMAN** have paid 5 guineas on acceptance of my article. *Student* 181/282.—You may be interested to hear that yesterday I had a letter from the Editor of the **ARGOSY**—they have offered me 25 guineas for my story. *Student* 3577/3015.—I have had my story accepted by **BLACKWOODS**, who are paying me £25 for it; also one or two others, at smaller rates of course, for service magazines. *Student* 120/28/8.—I have established contact with the Editor of **PUNCH**. The item was accepted for Charivaria and is a good start. *Student* 391/28/7.—I am sure you will be pleased to know that my article submitted for my Second Lesson was published in the **DAILY MIRROR** and I received 6 guineas for same. *Student* 848/129.—I hope you will be as pleased as I am that my article, submitted for Test Paper Two, has been sold, on your advice, to **MEN ONLY**. *Student* 1954/157.—I have just corrected a proof of my story for **WIDE WORLD**—they have since accepted another and I have sent in a third. *Student* 778/2119.—I thought it might interest you to know that **THE COUNTRYMAN** has accepted a short article of mine on an old country custom. *Student* 820/1310.—I had 7 guineas for my story, which appeared in **WOMAN'S COMPANION**; I also had an article published recently in **FARMER AND STOCKBREEDER**. *Student* 4135/7150.—I have sold an article to the **COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH**—they are sending me a cheque for 5 guineas. *Student* 184/315.—As you suggested, I submitted the article to the **NEW STATESMAN**. One was published on July 17. *Student* 1404/6/5/49.—I am pleased to tell you that the article which I wrote for Test Paper Two and submitted on your recommendation, to **CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER**, was accepted. *Student* 988/226.—The magazine which accepted my story was **RED STAR WEEKLY**—they paid me 4 guineas. *Student* 1173/58.—The article has been accepted by **LONDON OPINION**, having earned 4 guineas. *Student* 1813/173.—My story was published in the June issue of **ARGOSY** and I have just had a letter from the Editor offering me 8 guineas for a second one. *Student* 187/43.—I have sold my first short story prepared for Lesson Eight, to **HOME NOTES** for 12 guineas. *Student* 1905/1387.—I have had an article, about 2,000 words, published by the **WEST SUSSEX GAZETTE**.

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THERE must be good reasons why 8 out of 9 housewives choose gas cooking every time—and there are! Of course every form of heating for cooking has *something* to be said for it—but GAS Cookers have *everything*. Gas is the speediest, cheapest way of cooking and its visible flame gives you extra fine control of heat. You'll find the new gas cookers better than ever. They grill and boil faster, are easier to clean and much more saving of gas. *See the demonstrations at your gas showrooms.*

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## EDITORIAL

# *Justice for juries*

THE basis of our legal system is the jury. British justice is founded on the twelve good men and true who, in strict privacy, attempt to come to a unanimous decision on the guilt or innocence of the accused.

To serve on a jury should be a privilege—and many people are pleased to receive the registered letter calling them to do so. But to others it is a source of concern, and they try, usually without success, to avoid service.

It is hard to blame them. For they may be forced to sit in the jury-box for weeks on end, while their businesses or homes are being neglected without them.

LAST year, after eight weeks of an Old Bailey case, the jury was told by Mr. Justice Glyn-Jones: "The grave burden of jury service has fallen on you with deplorable weight. I know you have suffered inconvenience, most of you some loss, some of you real hardship.

MR. JUSTICE GLYN-JONES
*"I wish it lay in my power"*

"I only wish it lay in my power to order some modification of the scanty standard of remuneration that you may receive." But he could only excuse them from further service for life.

At present, £1 a day and his minimum expenses are the most a juror can hope for as compensation. The judge gets £14 a day for 365 days a year. Barristers' fees are sometimes £100 a day.

How can jurymen concentrate on the evidence when many of them are losing every hour the case drags on? How, when they retire to consider their verdict, can they avoid hurrying their discussions, possibly unfairly?

WHILE some people get called as jurors half a dozen times, many householders who would be pleased to sit in the jury-box never get called at all.

Some sheriffs pick their jurors from the electoral register with a pin. Others haphazardly call one whose surname begins with an "A," two from the "Bs," three from the "Cs," and so on. This seems a curious way to go about securing justice.

Two major reforms are necessary. One is to pay jurors full compensation for the time they lose. The other is to see that householders are called in rotation.

BEFORE the House of Commons now is a private member's bill to permit the Home Secretary and Treasury to award higher compensation to hard-hit jurors.

This should be taken over by the government and extended to make all jurors secure in the knowledge that they are not losing by their public service.

The law would not suffer, and prisoners would still get scrupulously fair treatment. It is about time that the jury did, too.

## THIS WEEK'S COVER

ALL day long they've been typing letters to other countries. Now, after office hours, it is their turn to dream. K. J. Petts's "voyagers" indulge in the most pleasant of winter pastimes—holiday-planning, with visions of Norwegian fiords, a *plage* on the Riviera, Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens, ruins in Rome, Dutch cheese markets. Wherever they choose for a holiday, next year's memories will be richer for this year's dreams.

"HAVE A HAMMERTON FOR ZEST"

Hammerton Oatmeal Stout

A WATNEY BREW

Just Out!

# Better Home Making

**A WONDERFUL NEW GUIDE TO CREATIVE HOME MAKING AND MANAGEMENT**

IF you are a natural home-maker you will welcome this great new book as an aid to your talents. If you do not readily have ideas, you will find a thousand-and-one in BETTER HOME MAKING. It covers every facet and activity of successful home management —the house, the home, husband and family! It is written so understandingly that it is at once a real friend and wise companion for your every mood.

**Covers all these Home interests and more!**

**Comprehensive Furnishing . Health in the Home . Home Handyman . China and Linen . The First Baby . How to do Patchwork . Careers Section . Easy Entertaining . Bathroom Beauty . Making Furniture . Sensible Slimming . Fears and Phobias . Caravan Homes . Etiquette . New Beauty Secrets . Child Psychology . Antiques . Beautiful Flower Arrangements . Jewellery Wear and Care . Be a Spare-Time Artist . Charming Dinner-mats to make . Miniature Gardens . Curtains and Loose Covers . Efficient Laundering . Perfumes for your Personality . Start an Aquarium . Leases and Agreements . Teacup Fortunes . Embroidery Ideas . Gift Making . Earn a little extra . Ideas in Cookery, etc.**

*BETTER HOME MAKING solves your daily problems*

*How can you furnish a one-room flat. How do you start a home aquarium? How does one recognise genuine antiques? Do you wish you could make new chair seats, a loose cover for the armchair, and some cupboards and built-in furniture? Your son needs an open-air life. What career should he follow? Your daughter is stage-struck. Shall you let her follow her dream? You want the right wine to go with a rather special dinner—how little can you serve and what should it be? Do you want to know how to carry out interior and exterior house repairs?*

**BETTER HOME MAKING is The Exciting New book of 1954.**

**560 PAGES of Creative Ideas and Advice**

**600 Practical Illustrations in Colour and Monotone**

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Please send me BETTER HOME MAKING. It is understood that I may return the work within eight days. If I keep it I will send a first payment of **ONLY 5s.** eight days after delivery, and **ONLY 5s.** monthly thereafter, until £2 15s. 0d. has been paid. Cash price within eight days is £2 10s. 0d.

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JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

FEBRUARY 6, 1954 VOL. 95 NO. 2484 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON


# FREE SPEECH

## His wife was too keen on her job

WHEN our youngest child went away to school, my wife found that she had time on her hands, so she decided to take a job.

A friend of ours is in business as an interior designer and decorator, and he accepted her help for two mornings a week. The two mornings stretched steadily; before long she was working five full days a week, and bringing home patterns and schemes to study during the evening. When the school holidays came, she had no time to spend with the children. I, for one, am not at all convinced that it is right for married women with families to go out to work.—G. L. C., County Durham.

### *London Town*

ON my arrival in Britain by air a month ago, I found the Customs officials most courteous. In London a taxi-driver said: "You are from overseas, sir. Let me help you." A porter at King's Cross Station helped me to get a ticket, saw me to a compartment, told the guard to look after me, and suggested that I might like a cup of coffee before my train left. Since then, I have met with cheerful kindness on all sides.—SOUTH AFRICAN, Yorkshire.

. . . I am appalled by the lack of public hygiene in London. As a visitor from the Commonwealth, I was astonished to see fish for sale exposed to the dust of the streets, and cats lazing in the windows of butchers' and bakers' shops. Instead of being encouraged to wash their hands in public conveniences, people are charged threepence for the privilege.—MISS JEAN DONATO, Pirham Road, West Kensington.

### *Two-way View*

ONE afternoon recently, I sat with four friends in a car at Cape Point, South Africa, nervously watching a troop of baboons, the descendants, perhaps, of the baboons in the first part of David Divine's new novel, *The Golden Fool* (JOHN BULL, January 16). They jumped on to the bonnet and roof, and looked at us through the closed windows. After about twenty-

five minutes, we gingerly opened the doors. We were still feeling nervous when this photograph was taken. I am standing behind Renée, encouraging her to feed a titbit to one of the inquisitive animals. — MISS MAIRE UNSWORTH, Lonsdale Road, Bolton, Lancashire.

. . . When I was a girl of twelve, I went with an aunt and uncle for a picnic at Selukwe Hill, near Gwelo in Southern Rhodesia. I raced ahead to the top of the hill, and then I saw that I was surrounded by baboons, about thirty of them, all standing on their hind legs, dancing, jabbering and barking. They seemed to be deciding my fate. I stood absolutely still, and stared at them as they shambled about taking counsel with each other, nodding their heads, and almost talking. Luckily, they decided to retreat, but they went down on all fours, picked up some small stones, and hurled them at me before they went.—MRS. J. DAVIES, Ivy Cottage, East Street, Billingshurst, Sussex.

### *What's Their Line?*

IN Tiptree, a village well known for its fruit and jams, we have roads called Strawberry Lane, Cherry Chase, Bird Lane, Brew Office Row and Damson Gardens, and a house called Rhubarb Hall. — W. V. TRACY, Maldon Road, Tiptree, Essex.

### *O'Grady Says*

THE evening train from Victoria to Brighton was packed with home-coming office workers. We were still miles from the terminus when one man stood up and took his coat from the rack. Within seconds nearly every-one else in our Pullman-type carriage was standing. They remained jammed in the aisle for several minutes until the train ran into the station. They may have hoped to get out of the carriage quickly, but there was a hold-up of the kind seen at the gate of a sheep-fold.—G. A., Sussex.

### *Always Right*

MY mother went into a shop to buy me a toothbrush; I wanted a soft one because my gums were sore. The assistant brought her a brush, and she asked: "Is that a hard one?"

"Madam," said the man, "we only stock the one kind, the best. You won't get a harder toothbrush in the whole of Glasgow."

"Oh, I wanted a soft one," said my mother.

The assistant barely faltered. "Run it under the tap, madam, and this brush will be as soft as any mother's heart." — DONALD HOGGAN, North-park Street, Glasgow.

### *Count Their Blessings*

AFTER nearly two years of marriage we were still childless, and our older married friends used to make indirect references to the selfish attitude of young couples to the responsibility of raising a family. When our son was born, they spoke sadly of the loneliness of an only child. Then our

*COMING SOON IN JOHN BULL*

## VIC OLIVER

**The maestro of mirth and music tells the hilarious story of his whirlwind life of**

GAY ADVENTURE

*FULL DETAILS NEXT WEEK*

daughter arrived; we were congratulated on being blessed with "a gentleman's family." Our third child has brought a more hesitant approach from our well-meaning critics. They suggest, with a stress on the economic factor, that three children nicely complete a family circle.—J. W. KEITH, Lyoncross Road, Glasgow, S.W.3.

### *La Mode Anglaise*

OUR black uniform gym slip, which is often attacked as an ugly garment, unflattering to the figure and likely to destroy a girl's dress sense, was featured in a recent issue of a French women's magazine as the chic dress for an eight-year-old. It was modelled in a very elegant little girl described as "Sophie, la petite romantique." —MRS. M. E. LEEBURN, Carnmoney Road, Glengormley, Belfast.

*Most French schoolgirls of eight do not wear a uniform. Their usual dress is a smock buttoning at the back.*

### *At Your Service*

I STOOD at the side of a London street waiting for a break in the traffic. Three times couples came up to me to ask for help in finding their way, and each time I missed a chance to cross. In Barcelona there is a special force of guide-policemen to assist visitors. They wear a distinctive dress—red tunic, blue trousers and white helmet.—L. D. K., Romford, Essex.

### *Late Harvest*

OLIVER STRANGE wrote all his Western stories after he was sixty. An even more famous author, William De Morgan (1839 to 1917) published his first novel, *Joseph Vance*, when he was sixty-five. The reader whose husband thinks that retirement means the end of his useful life ("Free Speech," January 16) should tell him about these men.—P. HOOLE-JACKSON, Penzance, Cornwall.

### *On Top Of His Work*

HOW did Arthur Whittington get above the overhead telephone wires to photograph faultsman Jack Wooltorton (JOHN BULL, January 23) underneath them?—MRS. MARGARET DUNN, Worcester Park, Surrey.

*Whittington went up the pole first, and sat on the cap at the top. After*

*photographing Wooltorton (and tearing his trousers), he lowered his camera to an assistant, who took this picture.*

**Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed, and at usual rates for readers' photographs. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.**

If you prefer the extra-full flavour of coffee that is skilfully blended with chicory; if you like the convenience of a fine powder that is easy to measure, pleasant to handle and quick to dissolve in hot water; if you want to be sure of quality *and save money into the bargain . . .*

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4 OZ. TIN COSTS ONLY 2/2

*Ricory is a soluble coffee and chicory product composed of coffee and chicory solids, combined and powdered with added dextrose, meltose and dextrins.*

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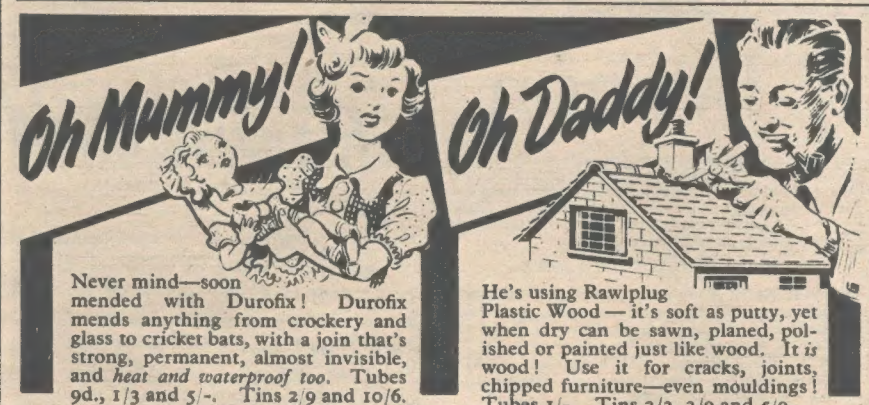
THE NEW COFFEE AND CHICORY DRINK BY NESTLÉ'S




Never mind—soon mended with Durofix! Durofix mends anything from crockery and glass to cricket bats, with a join that's strong, permanent, almost invisible, and *heat and waterproof too.* Tubes 9d., 1/3 and 5/-. Tins 2/9 and 10/6.

He's using Rawlplug Plastic Wood — it's soft as putty, yet when dry can be sawn, planed, polished or painted just like wood. It *is* wood! Use it for cracks, joints, chipped furniture—even mouldings! Tubes 1/-. Tins 2/3, 3/9 and 5/9.

RAWLPLUG DUROFIX RAWLPLUG PLASTIC WOOD

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8454

## Do you suffer from Exhaustipation?

IT HITS MOST OF US at times. We wake up in the morning feeling tired, sour, and headachy. That's Exhaustipation—the tiredness caused by constipation!

The trouble is in your colon—the last 4 or 5 feet of your 28 feet of intestine. This is like a soft rubber pipe, and it has to carry all the waste from the food you eat.

When this waste slides through smoothly, you feel fine. But sometimes it doesn't. It gets blocked. And then you feel heavy, sour, depressed—till you clear that pipeline.

Nothing better has been found for this job in 4,000 years, than a vegetable extract called podophyllin. Not a habit-forming drug, but a natural herb that works in Nature's way. This precious extract, carefully blended into Carters Little Liver Pills, very soon gets that pipeline working smoothly and sweetly again—and you feel marvellous!

Carters Little Liver Pills cost 1/8d. Take Carters today—and tomorrow the world will be all smiles.

## Why *MOTHERS* feel

# TIRED

***The cause may be***

***IRON-VITAMIN***

***deficiency—***

Because so many extra demands are made on their blood supply, women—especially *mothers*—suffer more than men from lack of IRON. Unfortunately the Iron obtainable from the average diet may not be enough to make up for all the Iron lost periodically as well as during pregnancy and in many other ways. The result is that you feel tired, nervy, breathless, run down and generally out of condition.

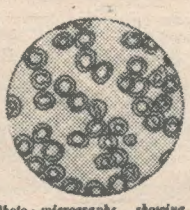

*Photo-micrographs showing (above) normal blood cells, and (below) pale, hypochromic cells from a case of iron-deficiency anaemia. Reproduced from HEMATOLOGY by Prof. Willis M. Fowler, M.D., Department of Internal Medicine, University of Iowa. Published by Paul B. Hoeber, Inc.*

### IRON ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

To restore your full health and vigour you *must* put the essential iron back in your blood. But your run-down system needs other help, too. That is why Dr. Cassells Tablets also contain such important ingredients as Copper Sulphate (to enable your body to absorb the iron), Calcium Phosphate (a valuable source of calcium and phosphorus), together with Vitamin $B_1$ (the energy vitamin) and Caffeine which have a tonic effect on the nervous system. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed below Dr. Cassells Tablets will enrich your blood with iron, tone up your whole system, and give you back—as it has done for thousands of others—the healthy energy that makes life worth while.

**REMARKABLE PROOF** **Healthy blood contains between 4,500,000 and 6,300,000 red cells in every cubic millimetre. In a case where the red blood count was down to 3,800,000 *a course of Dr. Cassells Tablets increased the number to 5,300,000 in 32 days.* It is these red blood cells, remember, which contain the vital IRON your system must have to keep you well.**

***TAKE*** **Dr. CASSELLS** **TABLETS** ***NOW***

**for Simple Anæmia · Listlessness · Nervousness · General Debility**
**Poor Appetite · Frequent Headaches · Constant Fatigue · Irritability**
**Sleeplessness · Inability to Concentrate · Susceptibility to Infection and Slow Powers of Recovery.**

***Prices 1/7 & 3/10***



*RHEUMATISM ATTACKS YOUNG AS WELL AS OLD*

**HOUSEWIFE (37)** | **GARDENER (70)**

*Recent photograph of Mrs. Wilson*

*Recent photograph of Mr. Hill*

**BOTH FOUND**

# Rheumatic Misery relieved by Fynnon

**These stories—two of many—tell of the relief from rheumatic pain which sufferers are receiving from Fynnon Salt.**

*Mrs. Jenny Wilson, 37, farm worker's wife of Charing, Kent, writes:* 'For the past year I have suffered attacks of fibrositis, gradually these attacks got more painful . . . unable to bear the pain . . . I started using Fynnon Salt. The results were amazing . . . Now I have started my spring cleaning and it is a real pleasure doing it . . . I shall always have Fynnon Salt in my medicine chest . . .'

*Mr. A. J. Hill, 70-year-old gardener of Windsor, Berks., also gives Fynnon Salt credit for relieving his rheumatism. He writes:* '. . . two years ago I could hardly move . . . I had to get my wife to push me out of bed . . . I could not get on my cycle. Then a friend recommended Fynnon Salt, and many thanks to them I have been back doing gardening, including scythe work.'

*(The originals of these two letters can be seen at our offices).*

Recent findings show that, although the more persistent kind of rheumatism develops later in life, the danger years for fibrositis, neuritis and lumbago are between 25 and 45 and that the improper elimination of waste matter from the body frequently contributes to rheumatic conditions.

### How Fynnon can help

Fynnon makes a two-way attack on impurities.
1. It is an effective but gentle aperient, using body fluid filtered through intestinal tissues to rid the system of waste matter.
2. It is a diuretic, flushing the kidneys and reducing impurities in the blood—approved treatment for many rheumatic conditions.

Take a teaspoonful of Fynnon every morning as soon as the first twinges are felt. You too will find marked relief. *But if you are seriously worried about your condition, don't delay to consult your doctor.*

**FYNNON SALT**

LARGE TIN 2/4½

*For the relief of all types of muscular Rheumatism, Neuritis, Sciatica, Lumbago and Fibrositis.*

FYNNON LIMITED, BRENTFORD, MIDDLESEX



## There's ALWAYS a job to be

# Sellotaped

*"Take it from me*

## Sellotape fixes everything

I'd never be without Sellotape. It's the modern way of mending, binding and sealing. It's neat, quick and effortless to use. Ask for Sellotape by name and make sure you get it!"

***AT STATIONERS AND STORES FROM 7d. A ROLL***

G&G



# *If only he could see it....*

From his viewpoint he is quite immaculate, but to everybody he meets he is a very untidy fellow indeed. What he can't see is the seedy sprinkling of dandruff on the back of his well-cut jacket. It ruins his appearance and threatens the health of his hair. There is *one* treatment that would help him . . . Dr. Page Barker's Scurf and Dandruff Lotion has been widely recommended by pharmacists and hairdressers for many years now, and excellent results have continued to increase its sales. Ask for Dr. Page Barker's Scurf and Dandruff Lotion at all chemists and hairdressers. 3/2d per bottle. Large size 4/4d.

**For a complete treatment use also DR. PAGE BARKER'S D.43 SHAMPOO**

*John Bull presents a Commando's eye-witness account of the final assault on Hitler's fortress of Europe . . . told by Murdoch McDougall*

# RAMPS DOWN!

*As the stocking-capped raiders moved inland, one of them trod on a hidden landmine. The blackness of the night was split by a lurid flame*

MURDOCH CHRISTIE McDOUGALL

Murdoch Christie McDougall was there through it all—on D-Day and afterwards, at Flushing and in the raids on the Dutch islands. He was twenty-two—fresh from Scottish and German universities—when war broke out, and he joined up at once. Commissioned in 1942, he heard that the Commando needed officers . . . and his war began. Now, married to a former Wren, he is a Dundee schoolmaster and has three strapping sons

IT WAS BOXING NIGHT, 1943. I leaned back against the long torpedo tube to allow the silent line of stocking-capped figures to move along the narrow deck towards the davits, where the dory hung. They looked lumpy and grotesque in their reversible kapok jackets, which they would wear until the shore was reached. Instead of a face, there seemed in each case to be a gap, for faces, ears and necks had been carefully smeared with sooty camouflage paint.

With a faint whirring the dory was lowered away, to slap softly into the water. A quiet word of command, and the little engine purred into life. Gradually, the tiny craft thrust away from the parent ship, to be joined a moment or two later by the other dory from the second M.T.B. Then the two of them chuffed towards the light line which denoted the surf of the shore.

The sound of their engines soon merged with the rolling of the waves, and the low outline of the dories disappeared from view, until they showed up again for a second as

*ILLUSTRATION BY FRED BANBERRY*

they entered the surf-line just before they beached.

On the deck of the M.T.B., I crouched beside the signaller and prepared for a wait of about four hours. It was bitterly cold. I thought grimly of the exultant voice of Lord Haw-Haw, announcing yesterday the liquidation of just such a group which had landed on the Dutch coast the previous day. Their dory had capsized as they were re-embarking in the surf, and they had been caught helpless in a searchlight from the shore.

The wireless beside the signaller began to crackle. The signaller answer quietly: "Hullo Pat One. Pass your message. Over."

"Hullo Pat One. Starting phase two. Will call only if things go wrong. Out."

That meant they had landed. The shore party would be making their way up to and through the wire when they had tested it for mines. In charge of the party was Pat Porteous, who had won the V.C. the previous year at Dieppe. Throughout this winter he and his troop had been engaged on small-scale operations, similar to this one, where they had been told to bring back a handful of sand, a piece of the wire defence, a specimen of a mine, and, if they could, a prisoner.

The possibility of a prisoner was the reason for my being there on this occasion. I was not in Pat's troop, but our troop was supposed to be making an attack on the same position the next night, if this present reconnaissance showed it to be worth while. As I spoke German, it had been decided that I should go along to give a quick interrogation of any prisoner.

### "There'll Be Hell On Now"

As I sat on the freezing deck, I wondered what the sentries on the coast in front of us were thinking. Of the warmth of the guard-rooms, or when their relief was coming, or of their next leave, or——

Suddenly the blackness of the shore was rent by a lurid orange flame; then the silence was shattered by the subsequent colossal explosion.

"There'll be hell on now," muttered one of the crew. "We'll have half the ruddy German Navy after us."

The silence that settled on shore seemed oppressive, and the darkness, as we strained our eyes for any sign of movement, weighed like lead. But the expected rattle of fire and the thump of grenades did not materialize. Nor was there any call for help from the shore party. I thought of them lying doggo, waiting to see if the noise of the explosion was going to bring out a patrol or search party.

Away over to the left a flare shot skywards, and in the distance came the sound of gunfire.

"Wonder what *they're* playing at," said the sailor.

"Probably the coastal guns practising," said the signaller. "They nearly caught us the other night by mistake."

"Let's hope they don't switch round here," said the sailor fervently.

Again we waited, while time slipped freezingly by. I glanced at my watch. Still two hours to go, with an extra hour to wait if they didn't show up on time. Queer there wasn't any sound from the shore party.

### Felt Fifteen Feet Tall

A searchlight suddenly stabbed its accusing finger across the water on the starboard bow, and began to flicker from side to side. The other M.T.B., which lay to our starboard beam, stood out sharply against the whiteness of the light. I felt about fifteen feet tall. The searchlight was on a headland about a mile along the coast. We knew there was another one on the headland on the port side, and though it was unlikely that we could be seen from the shore in the light of one of them, the two together might show us up to anyone using night glasses. If we were seen, and still had to wait for the shore party, we might quite well be cut off by E-boats and have to make a running fight of it all the way home.

The light continued to flicker and flash on the water for about another quarter of an hour, then it went out as suddenly as it had begun. The tension on board relaxed. I was no longer cold. I was numb. I thought of the dories, manned by two men, lurking offshore waiting for the signal that would send them scurrying in to collect Pat and the others. Straining my eyes to the port side, I fancied I could see the low, dark shape of the nearer one.

The set on the deck crackled into life. "Hullo Pat One. Coming back with one casualty. Send in for us. Over."

"Hullo Pat One. Wilco. Out."

The signaller passed the message on and sent

Embarking at Southampton—jumping-off point saw an escorting destroyer torpedoed. It broke

the dories in shorewards. Another period of waiting, then—"Here they come."

The little craft drew nearer, till they finally slapped and bumped alongside. The naval officer leaned over. "How did it go?"

Back came the cheerful voice of Pat Porteous as the dory swung inboard. "Oh, all right. Someone trod on an S-mine, and the damn thing didn't go off till we'd all passed, then it hit Corporal Richards in the back. He's O.K. though. We got some sand and a mine, and a bit of wire."

"Good. We'll start for home."

In the stifling little cabin below, Pat removed a layer or two of sweaters, settled himself in the corner and said: "A lot of bother, but I suppose it's worth while if these odds and ends tell them anything." A couple of hours or so later, we were in Dover harbour.

Back in the lonely house in which we had been secluded for several weeks now, I found Len Coulson waiting for the news we might bring. Len was a strong-looking character, with black hair and a magnificently broken nose. He had been a long time in the Commando and had taken over "F" troop shortly after I had joined it as a subaltern. Since then, he had become my best friend in the unit, along with Peter Mercer-Wilson, who was our other subaltern. Now they both plied me with food and drink while I gave them what little information I could.

### Were Used As A Target

"Did they say anything about tonight?" asked Len. "We've had no word here."

"We've only two nights left," said Peter, "then there'll be a moon again, and that means scrapping the thing for another month."

"Well, we'll order a troop parade for this afternoon," said Len. "We're bound to have word by then. You'd better get some sleep, Mac, just in case."

That afternoon, the atmosphere on parade was electric. For weeks we had been training for this operation. Three times we had embarked, and each time we had had to return with the task unaccomplished. On one occasion we had run into a gale; on another, we had lain a mile off the French coast while the searchlights had swept the water till time had run out; and the third time, as we were nearing the enemy coast, a small craft towing a target had passed across our bows and we had found

The author (second from right) with three brother officers—Captain David Style, M.C., Major Pat Porteous, V.C., and Captain Gordon Webb, M.C. Major Porteous won his V.C. in the Dieppe raid

for Normandy. Here, on the fateful morning of June 6, the Commandos in two, says McDougall—"the most depressing sight imaginable"

The manoeuvres—in which live ammunition was always used—are over. As the Commandos wait on board ship for the D-Day signal, a sergeant primes grenades

ourselves being straddled by the coastal guns practising.

Len came out. In his hand he held a message form. The sergeant-major eagerly called the troop to attention. Peter and I saluted. Len shook his head. "It's off," he said. "We go back to Lewes tomorrow, then on leave."

It was a disgruntled troop that filed in for leave passes a couple of days later in the troop H.Q. in Lewes. "Action!" snorted McVeigh to the sergeant-major. "I can get more action in a pub on a Saturday night than I can with this lot."

"It's no good starting on me," said Taff Edwards, the sergeant-major, with whom McVeigh had soldiered for years.

"Look at the papers," snarled McVeigh. "Second Front! they say. We couldn't open a can of bully. Come on, Taff, let's have a pint before we go."

### Shots Cracked And Zipped

We stood on the threshold of 1944. The Dieppe operation had been in August, 1942, and that had been the last major operation on which the whole unit had been engaged. Pat Porteous and "D" troop had been active with dory parties throughout the winter of 1943, but the rest of us had trained up and down the country for various tasks and in various ways.

I had joined the unit after Dieppe to replace John McDonald, who had been killed there. I had felt very inadequate in the face of the experience of the others, and I had found the whole Commando brimful of confidence. All the training was realistic, live ammunition was used on every exercise, and I was amazed at the confidence the men had, not simply in themselves, but in the others in their troop.

On the first troop attack we had made on a day exercise, my section had come into the assault from a flank, with the Brens giving cover. The shots had cracked and zipped around as we advanced, and I had remarked to the sergeant-major that I hoped the Bren-gunner knew what he was doing.

"We're all right with McVeigh on the gun," he had said. "He'll aim off as we go in. I'll play hell with him if he doesn't."

I had felt envious of those who had taken part in the early raids on Lofoten, whose main purpose had apparently been to convince a stubborn War Office that Commando troops could fulfil a useful purpose, and on Boulogne, where patrols had covered considerable distances ashore without meeting much opposition. I heard from the signals officer, who now had plenty of wireless sets at his disposal, of the system of bird-whistles they had been told to devise for Lofoten, when no sets could be spared for an irregular formation. I heard how tommy-guns had been issued immediately before embarkation on an operation and withdrawn as soon as the troops returned.

With each successful operation carried out by any Commando unit, the publicity in the press had helped to force the hand of the reluctant War Office, against whom people like old Admiral Keyes, the man who had commanded the greatest raid of the first World War—the one made on St. Georges Day, 1917, at Zeebrugge—had from the outset been struggling.

Keyes himself, discouraged by continual rebuffs, had finally relinquished his position as Chief of Combined Operations to Lord Louis Mountbatten, who had enthusiasm and influence as well as ability.

When the Dieppe operation was decided on, two Commando units were allocated tasks. No. 3 Commando was to silence a battery to the left of the landing area, while No. 4 was to deal with the one on the right. No. 3 Commando had already distinguished itself at Vaagsö, and No. 2 had played a magnificent part in the raid on St. Nazaire. Now it was the turn of No. 4, whose achievement at Dieppe proved to be the only unqualified success of the entire operation.

### Attacked Under Smoke

From various people and at different times I heard details about fragments of the operation and I was able to build up an accurate picture of what took place that summer's morning. The Commando was split into two groups, one giving covering fire, the other making the assault. "F" troop was in the assault party. The men landed at dawn and made their way round to a position behind the battery, while the covering party approached it from the front. Now, as the mortarmen from the covering group changed from H.E. bombs to smoke, they moved in to the attack from the cover of a little wood.

As they reached a farm building, they overran a group of enemy forming up to put in a counter-attack against the mortarmen, who were causing a lot of trouble. Surprise was now lost, and they broke into a run towards the wire of the battery perimeter. An open space had to be crossed, and it was there that Roger Pettiward, the troop leader, was killed. Seconds later, John McDonald, the other troop officer, also fell mortally wounded, and the troop was left without an officer.

Pat Porteous, who was acting as liaison between the two groups, saw the momentary confusion and rushed to take over the assault. He was wounded in the hand from close range, but killed his assailant and led the charge on the gunpits. They swarmed through and over wire, leaped down into the pits, stabbing and hacking as the gun crew rose to meet them.

### Nine Commandos Died

In the lead, wounded again, this time through the thigh, was Pat Porteous. At the last gunpit, he collapsed unconscious.

The battery was silent and cleared of enemy. The nine Commando dead were laid out beside the demolished guns. Then, while the enemy dead in and around the gunpits bore silent witness, the Union Jack was run up.

Soon afterwards, the signal for the withdrawal was given, and the men made their way down to the beach that had been used by "C" troop, carrying with them the wounded who could not walk, down the long, steep gully that had been choked with wire till David Style had blown it with Bangalores, down to the landing-craft.

As they moved out from the shore, away from the covering screen of smoke, aircraft roared down on them with machine-guns blazing, spraying them again and again from stem to stern as they butted and slapped their way out into the Channel. In the bows of one L.C.A., yelling defiance as he brought his Bren to bear on the attacking planes, was McVeigh. Behind them, in the distance, the pall of smoke still hung thick and black over Dieppe. . . .

During the winter of 1942-43, we were stationed in Winchester, where, for the most part, each troop trained independently, though there was a big exercise every fortnight.

The establishment of the unit was by now firm. There were six troops, each consisting of about sixty men with three officers, and H.Q. troop, containing about ninety all ranks counting the signals and medical sections.

Eighty-five different regiments were represented in No. 4 and, as each man officially

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# Six hours to dawn

*by* ***DUDLEY HOYS***

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES WOOD

**He had to leave the house for the icy darkness. Now, injured, he must hang on—for six lonely hours . . .**

IT WAS JUST AFTER ELEVEN on that raw November night when the phone tinkled. Norton had actually started climbing the stairs to bed. He sighed, returned to the hall, and picked up the instrument.

"Yes?"

A voice unknown to him, a voice with a broad burr, said: "Is that Dr. Norton?"

"Yes? What's the trouble?"

"'Tis Joe, here. He's gey bad."

Norton wanted to say irritably: "Who the hell's Joe?" What he said in fact was: "Who is that speaking?"

"Tom Darley o' High Ground. Joe's the hired man."

"Well, what's the matter with him?"

"Got a gey big swelling under arm, he has. Came on sudden. And he's hot and feverish like."

Norton sighed again and said: "Very well. I'll see him. Your farm's somewhere up past the Fox, isn't it?"

"That's it. I'm phoning from the Fox. You drive up past the Fox for two mile, and High Ground turning's on the left."

Norton had to think for a few seconds. "Two miles past the Fox, and then turn left up the High Ground farm lane? Right, I'll be along."

He collected his case, slipped on his overcoat, and went out of the warm house to the garage. Though not freezing, it was a bitter night. A cold, dank wind, more penetrating than any frost, gnawed at the flesh. And the darkness had weight. You could almost touch it.

He got into his car, mentally cursing the prospect of an eleven-mile drive, six of them up the tortuous, walled road snaking through the dale, and about half a mile along a rising farm lane that probably had a vile surface.

There was this about it. If only he could sink his pride and make up his mind finally, there would not be many more of these ungrateful jobs to tackle. With his qualifications, he was bound to get a medical appointment in some town, if he chose to put in for it.

Deep in his mind, a voice nagged: "It'll be running away, that's what it will be."

Well, what of it? No one but an idiot would stay in a place like this.

When he turned into the dale road he had the night to himself. The rough stone walls might have been the sides of a tunnel topped by an ebony roof. The cloud had come low down on the fells and blinded the world. All he could see were the flanking stones that glistened under his headlights. The road twisted so much that it was impossible to let his low-slung, high-powered car move fast.

He swung round a sharp curve, and stopped dead. A Herdwick sheep, sleeping on the road, raised its head, considered him with amber, untroubled eyes, and refused to budge. He had to get out and give it a bad-tempered prod. It whickered, scuttled to the side, jumped the wall, and went off, blaring through the darkness.

Norton found himself hating the thing. He tried to laugh at this absurdity, and failed. He felt tired and frustrated. He had been a fool to take on this practice, an impulsive fool. The house was all right, and Annie, the elderly maid inherited from Blake, his predecessor, ran it pretty well. The country around looked magnificent in good summer weather. That was how he had first seen it, when acting as Blake's locum for a month. But at this time of year it got on your nerves, with its rain and cold and mists and depressing emptiness. As for the practice itself, it had been all right for Blake, born and bred in the neighbourhood. But for a southerner. . . .

These isolated farms meant a huge daily mileage. You spent most of your days getting from one to another. And your patients were dour, nearly dumb, and when they did speak, theirs was not the Queen's English, but a lingo that often baffled him with its queer words and intonations. It was hard to meet them on common ground, for he knew nothing about their sheep and their fells, and they seemed to take scant interest in anything else. They were hard-working and honest, but so unsubtle they gave him the impression he was being more a vet than a doctor.

HE spoke aloud, a habit he had developed with this interminable and lonely driving. He said in an exasperated voice: "You're thirty. You're in a dead-end job. You're forgetting half you knew. Why didn't you wait for a partnership in a big city where at least the people themselves might mean something to you?"

Yes, that was really what mattered most. People made places. You could enjoy a slum if those around you were congenial. But these folk. . . .

You couldn't describe them as hostile; they merely treated him as if he were a mechanic who had come to put a bit of machinery right. He expected no gushing thanks. But he did expect a little appreciation now and then. Only a saint went through this world without needing the warm glow of occasional praise.

By heaven, how right Eileen had been! She had said: "No, dear. For your own sake, I'm not going to marry you yet. You'll be busy for a while settling down and getting to know the people. That's almost more important than the medical side."

The girl brought the bowl and he lay back as

He gave a tired grunt. Impossible to get to know people who never took any interest in you. It was appalling to imagine what the effect of the place would have been on Eileen if he had persuaded her to marry him directly he took over the practice. There she was, living a full life in the south, with crowds of friends. How on earth would she have stood up to this?

He would clear out. That was the right answer. He would take a job in a place where his patients appreciated him and said so, a place where he could feel he was doing something worth while. It would make all the difference to him, and to Eileen.

Out of the blackness he could dimly see the squat granite bulk of the Fox to the left of the road. He drove up the dale. Presently his headlights picked out the High Ground lane. He swung into it, and from then on had to crawl. Between the sides of his car and the stone walling there were scarcely six inches to spare. As for the surface, it was vile, bouldery and rutted, a jolt every yard, and stones clanking up against his mudguards.

For five minutes he crawled along and up the

Darley began to bathe his knee. He wanted to relax, but knew he mustn't. He had a job to do

lane. What happened next was bad luck. The narrow lane appeared to veer left, with a secondary fork to the right. In fact, that secondary was the approach to the farmhouse. The turn to the left was the relic of an old access road to another farm, Red Brow, long since derelict and collapsed into heaps of stones among flourishing nettles. It led between two of the High Ground intakes to a gate that opened upon the unfenced fell.

The surface was a series of bumps and holes. Norton swore. He was furious. Though he had never met Tom Darley in person, he was already picturing him as one of those backwoods types that live like pigs, earthy and yet aloof, who would growl out an infrequent "Ay," and take for granted the services of a State-paid doctor.

The lane dropped sharply into a dip. Water gleamed ahead. The floor of the dip was washed by a beck that flowed in through a hole in one wall and out through a hole opposite. To Norton, it was the last straw. What did this oaf Darley think a doctor's car was—a duck?

He stopped the car, picked up his case, got out, and edged his way over some stepping-stones at the base of the wall. Once beyond the range of his headlights, he realized the truth. It was not only pitch-dark. He was in a cloud as well. He pulled out a pencil torch he kept for looking down patients' throats, groped his way forward, and reached the gate.

What came as a crowning exasperation was to open the gate, walk through, and then find nothing. Under the thin and limited beam of his torch the shattered track merely went on into the darkness. He told himself that people living at the back of beyond like this had no right to send for a doctor at night. He walked on, hot with anger and irritation, while the track became less and less distinct.

"Hi!" he yelled. "Hi! Where's this farm of yours?"

Flatly refusing to believe that the building could be any farther ahead, he moved away from the track, towards the right, crossing a stretch of damp bents and sodden brackens, discovered nothing, turned back for the track, and failed to find it.

Accompanying his annoyance was a nibbling of bewilderment now. How could a track vanish into thin air? Of course it couldn't. It was somewhere within a few yards of him, just outside the range of the small torch. The smearing cloud made matters worse.

Casting around, and peering, he had glimpses of rock and sodden moss, looming up dimly in the aura of his torch, and disappearing as suddenly, like the fleeting images in a dream.

At the end of five minutes he had to believe it: he had not only lost the track; he had lost himself.

He had got past the stage of annoyance. He was slightly worried. For one thing, the patient might be in real need of immediate treatment. For another, he was growing more and more aware of the cold. The cloud vapour had soaked his overcoat. His town shoes were letting through the damp. Wet brackens had sprayed his trouser-legs. The tips of his fingers were painfully chilled.

He started to shout. "Hi! Hallo, there! Hi!" Next, he listened hopefully and yet uneasily for some answering call. What he heard was a muted blend of sounds, the sough of the wind, the rustling of bracken stems, the whispering trickle of moisture, and he had the impression that they were encased inside the walls of a vast silence.

To conserve the battery of the torch, he had switched it off. The blackness surrounding him was a trifle frightening. It was sheer, blind nothing. Probably the cloud was the cause of it. But for the cloud, surely his headlights would be showing a glimmer from that walled lane?

He put down the case, blew on his hands, slapped his arms against his chest. "Well," he said, as if talking to a companion, "what are you going to do now?"

Stay where he was, until the tomb-like cold sapped his vitality? Keep on moving, and probably wander farther and farther from the track? What did that matter? Doing something was better than doing nothing.

He switched on the torch, cautiously following the beam of it. Something huge reared up, and for a second the breath stuck in his throat. There was a blaring sound, and what had been a moment of menace became a Herdwick ewe scuttling away from him. He remembered how mist could magnify, and pretended to laugh at himself.

Now, the ground before him had a distinct downward gradient. That was encouraging. It meant that if he kept on he was bound to land up somewhere in the dale. He might have to shin over a wall or two, but eventually he would reach the certainty of the dale road.

There was squelchiness in front, lush green moss and the dead stems of cottongrass. He hesitated, sweeping his torch right and left to find a way around it. It appeared to extend on and on. He took a few paces across the seeping softness, and it rose over the tops of his shoes, and trickled coldly inside them. His only course was to draw back and try another direction. Keeping to a line of firmer ground, he was brought up short by a wall of crags. Naked granite glistened out at him and down at him. It had leapt into being without warning. It gave him a shock.

He sat down on a boulder, switched off the torch, and forced himself to face hard fact. He might be within a few hundred yards of the dale road, but only luck would lead him to it. There were four main directions he could choose, and three of them would be wrong. If he chose the wrong one, he might easily stumble over the edge of some ravine or crag-face, and break his neck. Yet the only alternative was to keep still. For how long? He glanced at his watch. It was ten minutes to twelve. Dawn could not be much earlier than half past six. Squat here for nearly seven hours? Endurable to a hill-sheep. But to any human being . . . ?

Damn and blast these fells! They might be the wilds of Abyssinia. You could hardly believe they were a part of England. And once, in summer, he had thought they looked beautiful! They were nothing more than hideous, tilted deserts of rock, and the dalesfolk who lived among them were like them—hard, primitive, callous.

He shivered, and turned on his torch, a feeble glimmer in the thick swirling mist. The boulder

He started to shout. There was no answer. Silence and darkness enclosed him like a shroud. He was utterly, hopelessly lost

he was sitting on felt like a chunk of ice. He stood up. He had got to keep moving: got to, or his circulation would drop to danger point. For more than six hours he would have to walk and rest, walk and rest, no matter how far he might stray in the wrong direction. In a casual fashion he had read accounts of hikers losing their way on the fells and dying from exposure, and he had rather wondered how such things could happen. Now, it was easy to understand. Alarmingly easy.

He followed the waning beam of his torch, anywhere, raising his feet high and stamping them. The vibrations helped a little. At one spot the tiny golden flowers of the tormentil peeped up at him. He felt grateful to them. If they could survive in this deathly wilderness, he could. He would.

In a spate of challenge, he quickened his pace, found himself among a shaggy growth of dying yet tall brackens, stubbed his toe against a hidden rock, tripped over, crashed his knees against the sharp corner of a boulder, and his cheekbone against another.

Gasping with pain, he struggled to his feet. His fingers touched gingerly at the cut cheek. Not much damage there. But the kneecap was another matter. It was swelling rapidly, and growing fiery. Any more walking was going to be something of a torture.

Stooping, he picked up the fallen case. His right hand scrabbled about in search of the torch. He found it quickly. But it gave no more light. It was broken.

It came to him then that he was terribly tired and achingly cold. He slumped down on the boulder that had damaged his knee, and though he had courage, it was beginning to ebb. Apart from the knee, he dared not attempt any more walking without a glimmer of light. He might shout for a while, although it was a million to one against being heard by anybody. He might take something from his case, to ease the pain. If he dropped off in a doped sleep there was quite a chance it might be permanent.

He tried a spell of shouting. Just as he reached the point of relapsing into silence, there was a sound from somewhere. It could have been a sheep blaring. He yelled again, and an answer came back, a human voice.

The relief was immense. He kept on yelling, and a pallid glow soaked into the darkness, and out of nowhere materialized a tall, wide-shouldered man wearing breeches and shepherd's boots and an ancient jacket. His eyes were very blue under the light of the storm-lantern he carried.

He said slowly: "Ah. I was right, then. Reckon you're Dr. Norton?"

"I am, and thank God you've found me! What with the cold and a damaged knee, I'm just about all in." He was too exhausted to be bitter.

"We're not so far from High Ground. Take a short cut, we can. Here, I'll give you a lift." Tom Darley hung the wire loop of the lamp over his jacket button, turned, and took Norton on his back as though he were a small boy. By the way he trudged across the dark fell, he might have been crossing a well-lit street.

He said: "You took the wrong turning. Ay. Coming down from High Ground, I saw a light up the other fork. I thought, that's likely the doctor. When I found the empty car, I reckoned you'd crossed the beck on foot, and gone out through the fell-gate and maybe lost yourself."

Norton said: "I lost myself, all right." Reaction had turned him sleepy. He was too sleepy to ask after the patient. He was vaguely conscious of being carried through a gateway, and presently through another. Warmth and light roused him. He was inside a big farm kitchen, a girl fussing about. He was being lowered into an armchair. The chair was close to the kitchen stove. The warmth was delicious.

"Ay," Darley was saying, "you're fairly starved." He was removing Norton's sodden overcoat. The girl, Darley's daughter, knelt down to unlace his wet shoes.

Norton said: "That's all right. I can manage, thanks."

"I'll get you a drink of something hot," the girl said. "And what about your knee? I'd best tend it."

She pointed at the blood oozing through the knee of Norton's trousers.

What Norton wanted to say was: "As I'm a doctor, you'd better leave that to me." But what he did was to lie back in the chair. The girl brought him a glass of hot whisky and lemon, and then held a bowl of warm water while her father rolled up his left trouser-leg and started to clean the wound with something he had brought from the kitchen cupboard.

"What's that?" said Norton.

Darley held up the bottle. "We always keep a few things. Ay." He smiled in a slow, almost begrudging fashion. "High Ground's pretty far to send for a doctor, unless 'tis serious."

With his daughter helping, he bandaged the knee efficiently. Norton felt drowsy. He wanted desperately to relax, but knew he mustn't. There was his patient.

He sat up. "You've made a good job of that. Thanks. And now you'd better take me up to see the patient."

The girl looked at her father nervously, and Tom Darley coughed. "Ay. Er—I'd best explain first. With time going on, I reckoned you were never coming. And Joe was gettin' that bad, I had to do summat."

His professional instinct aroused, Norton said: "Do something?"

"Yes. I put the pig-knife in boiling water, and then cut the swelling. It drained gey quick."

Norton was sitting very still. He said: "I'd like to see him at once, if you don't mind."

Tom nodded, collected one of the lamps, helped him upstairs, and led him into a low-pitched bedroom. Snoring was coming from the bed. Norton looked down at the young man lying there, rested a hand on his temples. Temperature was almost normal. He drew down the bedclothes and felt his pulse. That was steady. He unbuttoned the pyjama jacket; the patient stirred, and went on sleeping. Around the shoulder-blade and under the arm, Norton saw neat bandaging.

He said: "All right."

As they went out, Tom said: "'Twere a risk, but I've raised the knife before."

"What d'you mean?" asked Norton in a small voice.

Tom said: "Sheep get tumours on brain. You can tell the position by the eyes. If the left eye's wrong, tumour's on t'other side, and vicee versee. I've used the knife and a goose feather on many a sheep."

Norton opened his mouth, changed his mind, and closed it. They were downstairs by now, and Tom was saying:

"After Peggy and I had made him comfortable like, I thought to myself, happen doctor comes, after all? Best go down and save him a journey. Reckoned there was no need for you to see Joe before morning. So I started off down, and that's how I came to see your car lights."

Norton was back in the armchair. Something curiously pleasant was lapping at the fringes of his drowsy mind. He said: "I see. That was decent of you."

"It was the least I could do. 'Tis a bit rough, drivin' round these parts. But you'll get used to it."

Norton heard himself saying: "As a matter of fact, I've been thinking of leaving the district."

Tom's brows went up a shade. "Leave the district? Nay, you mustn't do that. Folks round here would miss you sorely."

Norton laughed shortly. "I doubt it."

"Doubt it, man?" cried Darley. "Why, people round here have never spoken so highly of a doctor before. Look what you did for little Eva Sim, and Eb Wilson, and Jimmie Porter, and the rest."

"How do you know?"

Tom gave a grin of mild surprise. "'Twould be gey queer if I didn't know. Why, Arthur Sim talked o' nowt else one night down at the Fox. Reckoned you saved her life, he did, and the others all had summit to say about what a grand chap doctor was."

That pleasant sensation was creeping farther across Norton's mind. He said: "I didn't know you dalesfolk did much talking."

"Plenty," said Tom, "among ourselves." He nodded to his daughter, who took down a hot-water bottle from a hook.

"For your bed." She smiled.

"My bed? But I can't sleep here. . . ."

"Them fells has half fettled you," Darley said. "No need to drive back till morning. You're ready for a warm bed, and you're gettin' it here."

"But. . . ."

"That's what you'd say to anybody else, Doctor." Tom's voice was genially firm. "And I'm saying it to you. Can't afford to have the doctor ill. Nay. Go ahead, Peggy."

The girl began to fill the bottle.

"Can't afford to lose the doctor," Darley said slowly. "But seems we're going to, if you mean to leave district." He glanced up quietly from filling his pipe. "Is there no chance you might change your mind?"

"There is," said Norton. "A very strong chance."

And as he sank into bed and drifted off to reassuring sleep, it got stronger and stronger.

THE END

# Nancy's strolling players ring up the curtain—anywhere

*by DENNIS HOLMAN*

**With her spartan troupe of six, Nancy Hewins braves all weathers to bring drama to the loneliest village. And beneath the greasepaint lies a secret—all the players are women**

ONE JANUARY NIGHT, three years ago, seven women set out to cross the Pennines in a blizzard. The first pass they tried was barred by police, who said that several cars were already stuck. They tried a second way over, ran into a snowdrift, dug themselves out and then withdrew to a third pass farther north. By seven o'clock the following morning—eleven hours later—they reached their destination, a Lancashire village school where, at 9.30, they were due to perform *The Merchant of Venice* to an audience of children. The curtain went up on time.

Through difficulties like this, the Osiris Repertory Company takes drama to the remoter schools and villages of the British Isles. A self-contained, mobile touring unit, whose strength never exceeds seven, the Osiris last year gave nearly three hundred performances along a 30,000-mile route between the Orkneys and Jersey.

"We never refuse a request for a play," says Nancy Hewins, a plump, hearty and energetic spinster of fifty-one, who today directs the company she formed twenty-six years ago to take the classics to schoolchildren.

Since then, successive groups of Osirians have extended their scope to include adult audiences, and have played in village halls, market squares and public parks. They have played *Saint Joan* in a cathedral, *Everyman* in a ruined abbey, *Abraham Lincoln* in a Victorian manor house, and *As You Like It* in the Forest of Dean. Every summer they visit Jersey to give a festival of fourteen plays in a fortnight.

### Out Of Control On Icy Roads

To keep their dates they have travelled by train, aeroplane, steamer, canoe, on horseback and cycles and even by covered wagon. Usually, however, they move with their gear in two vintage Rolls-Royces. They were on the road throughout the freeze-up from January to March, 1947, and only one engagement had to be cancelled—in a village that had been cut off by deep snow. The company got through, but no audience turned up.

At that time the company had a large van. Driving through Sussex one day, Nancy Hewins found that the main roads were clear of snow and removed the chains from the wheels. As she turned off across country down a steep hill, however, the van rapidly began gathering speed. When she put the brakes on, the wheels merely locked and slid, and she could not steer into the banks as the wheels were in deep ruts.

With the entire company and its effects

**All Britain is the players' stage: in Chipping Campden they act *Henry IV*. They produced *Saint Joan* in a cathedral, and *Everyman* in abbey ruins**

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aboard, Nancy frantically tugged at the steering wheel. As they slewed round a bend, she managed to wrench the wheels out of the ruts and brought the van to a stop by grazing the bank.

"Nancy accepts engagements first and thinks about getting there afterwards," says her assistant, Kay Jones. After one late performance at a miners' institute in the Rhondda Valley during the war, they had to start immediately to be in time to appear next morning at a village school in Pembrokeshire.

With no signposts to guide her, Nancy, driving one of the cars, lost her way on the mountain roads. At cross-roads she would check her bearings with a compass which she consulted at a safe distance from the car's magnetic influence. Eventually she reached the school only to learn that the other car had broken down outside the village. "It was nine o'clock, with the play due to begin at ten," she recalls. "We towed the car in, rushed up the scenery and rang up the curtain without having had time for breakfast."

### Travelled By Dray And Canoe

During wartime petrol rationing, Nancy bought two horses and drays and made a 120-mile tour between Willersey and Bristol, giving eleven performances in eight days. Another time, to reach Thames-side villages and schools, she took the company by canoe. To face travel tests such as these, Osirians have to be carefully selected not only for their acting abilities but also for their enthusiasm. "I have to weed out the stage-struck applicants," Nancy says. "A girl has to be really keen to stick our life."

In many places, even elementary facilities do not exist for the players. "I shall never forget when we appeared in a village called Sedgley," says Kay Jones. "We played in the village hall and I came off the stage as Lady Macbeth with my hands dripping 'blood'. To wash them I had to go outside and use snow."

Stages have ranged from a billiard table in a working men's club to a platform made of tables, packing cases and benches—all at different levels. Nancy Hewins was playing Sir Toby Belch in a Gloucestershire school three years ago when she fell through the stage. Later the headmistress apologized, explaining that the joists were rotten. Last summer the company again visited the school—and the joists were still rotten. The players trod warily.

In one school the only entrance to the stage was through a four-foot square hatch three feet off the ground; another stage was reached by a gangway ascending through a hall door at ground level. One girl, making an entrance, struck the top of the door frame with her head; she continued through the play in a daze, and collapsed the moment the curtain fell.

### Sword Thrust Was Too Real

Every Osiris production, particularly those which include fights, must be adapted to varying circumstances. As Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Nancy has to fight a duel in which Romeo knocks up Mercutio's sword and Tybalt inflicts a fatal wound. The sword usually passes near Nancy's armpit, but on one stage composed of tables Tybalt tripped as the thrust was delivered. "I saw it coming for my throat and caught the point with my hand. I was badly cut," says Nancy, who has a name for laying about her lustily in stage duels.

As Richard III she takes on three opponents together. Once, only two appeared and she caught a glimpse of the white face of the third cowering in the wings. The girl, who had lost her shield, was too scared to face the redoubtable Nancy without it. Nancy herself has been the victim of some over-realistic violence. Playing Caesar, she got in the way of a dagger-thrust, and as she lay bleeding an audience of boys cheered.

Another dagger-wound inflicted on Nancy brought a reprimand to the actress concerned for her carelessness, and there was a similar caution for another girl who fell six feet off the stage. "We can't permit ourselves such mistakes," Nancy says. "We undertake to play under difficult conditions and have to allow for them." Quick thinking is vital. When the company played *Oliver Twist* in a barn to a village audience, Nancy was attacked by a dog. She stopped acting, calmed the dog, handed it back to its owner, and went back into her part the moment she was sure the animal was under control.

The unit, which carries its own curtain, scenery and lighting, with Calor gas and paraffin pressure lamps for places without electricity, charges a shilling for each child (or a minimum of £10 a performance) and averages seven shows a week for forty-two weeks of term-time. Once, the Director of Education at Fife had nine applications for plays, for which Nancy could only spare three days.

"We fitted them in," she says. "Then we kept two more dates in Scotland before driving all night for a morning performance in Cudworth, Yorkshire. It was *The Merchant Of Venice*. We were so fagged that I provided seats in the trial scene for everybody."

After twenty-six years of playing to children, Nancy Hewins feels she has taken on as critical and exacting an audience as a company of players could meet. Children must be comfortable, she says, or they will fidget; they should not be overcrowded, or they will fight. Players have to make themselves heard or risk an uproar, and have to be word-perfect because textbooks of Shakespeare are often brought to performances, sometimes by an entire class. Every slip will be corrected by a chorus of prompters.

Stage corpses produce a rough response from juvenile audiences, especially when they appear on an improvised stage with the children close up. Now and then an outstretched actress's hand is shaken by a front-row spectator before a schoolmaster calls for order. In Jersey, Nancy was lying on the stage as the dead Lady Macbeth when some boys let loose a number of frogs. "I had to lie still while they hopped clammily over me."

If they are being entertained, however, children generally make a full-blooded audience. In the melodrama *Maria Marten*, Maria's appearance at the barn where the villain is waiting to murder her often produces a warning hiss that the man is behind the bushes with a gun.

The Osiris Repertory Company is legally rated a charity. It emerged out of the Isis Players, a company of amateurs who turned professional when they gave three performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in London elementary schools. In 1929 they went into the country, concentrating entirely on Shakespeare for schools and extending their range until they were offering twenty-one plays anywhere in Britain. Just before the war adults were also catered for.

The company is non-profit making. Nancy Hewins, and all other members—Kay Jones, Wynne Griffiths, Anne Harris, Rosemary Wood, Marion Keene and Thea Van Dam—receive the same wage of ten shillings a week, with a £5 bonus three times a year. Board and lodging are free, in a barn they renovated for themselves near Nancy's cottage in Willersey, Gloucestershire.

Most of the time, however, the girls are on the road. Early this summer they will tow their caravans north—to Scrabster, Caithness, where they embark for Stromness in the Orkneys. They are also due in the Shetlands before moving south again. In case of breakdowns, the leading car waits for the second Rolls and caravan at prearranged stops and turns back to look for them if they do not arrive within half-an-hour.

### Villagers Snubbed The Actors

Nancy adopted this system after police patrols of three counties had searched for her with the news that one of her cars had broken down. "I had to return and tow it two hundred miles to Carlisle," she says.

By now, Osirians are so accustomed to spartan working conditions that onlookers often find it hard to believe that there are no men in the company. But as it may detract from a performance if audiences know that all the parts are played by women, Nancy asks sponsors not to give them away. People frequently go home without being any the wiser, and an entire village was once fooled—with tricky consequences. Quartered in the village hall, the company noticed a marked coldness in the attitude of the inhabitants. One morning the local vicar called, and Nancy mentioned the snubs.

"That's what I've come to see you about," he replied. "Having seen your play, people seem to think you have a number of men in the company, and they don't approve of your living in the same room." — THE END

Nancy (left) and two of her troupe put up curtains. They travel with full theatre equipment

# THE IMPOSSIBLE FLIGHT

*by PETER DOLLAR*

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

I'd flown a faulty plane once before . . . fourteen people had died. This time there were thirty-four people on board — and one of them was Tay

WE CAME IN over the windless blue of the Bismarck Sea, flying at fifteen hundred feet. Ahead, Port Wisdom was a tin-roofed oasis in the green monotony of the New Guinea coast. Heat-mist was rising from the sluggish tide-flats, and above the town the short, dusty airstrip stood out like a scar. We were testing.

Beside me, in the co-pilot's seat, Billy Palmer, the little mechanic, gave me the thumbs-up sign, questioningly. Billy was a small, leathery individual with a sly, friendly grin and a face that was wizened like a good-natured walnut. I'd known him only a couple of days and already he was calling me "Pete."

"Ready on two, Pete?"

I flipped the magneto switch, starting the check on the starboard engine. "Right mag."

"O.K."

I switched back. "Both—left—both."

"Well, well," said Billy. "It works. I'm a genius. Let's try number one."

"Say your prayers this time," I said, and I glued my eyes to the battered cowling on the left wing as Billy took over the switch.

"Billy said: "Right!" The engine ran smoothly. "Both."

"O.K."

"Left!"

With a nerve-tingling *bang* the engine back-fired and immediately began trying to jump off the wing. Automatically I reduced number one throttle. Billy had it back on both mags, but the old DC-3 still shuddered, dipping drunkenly off on one wing while the instruments vibrated crazily in their mountings. I had my hand on the button ready to feather the prop when the commotion stopped. Gingerly I fed back power. The engine took it and we straightened out, cruising smoothly in towards the coast.

"Well, well," said Billy. "I always like it best when they decide to come back."

I glanced at him absently. For a moment I let my mind wander, remembering another engine; the one that hadn't come back.

It had been snowing that night, a blinding squall over southern England, when that engine had cut out and died. And I'd never forgotten those last frantic seconds as it dropped to earth.

I was still in hospital when I heard the inquiry's verdict. *Pilot error. Failure to maintain assigned altitude.*

With an engine out and the wings iced up! But that was the verdict.

Fourteen people had died that night. So had I, as far as airline flying was concerned.

I shrugged impatiently, shaking off the memory. Here, dim in the distance beyond flat miles of jungle, rose the ragged mountain backbone of central New Guinea. In the heat of late afternoon those peaks were crowned by incredible white giants, towering cumulo-nimbus clouds of the tropics topped by anvil-shaped ice-caps at 40,000 feet. Somewhere up there, lost among the ridges a week's journey overland, was the McEwen mine. There was another airstrip up there. There was this paint-starved DC-3 they brought in. And now there was me, the pilot—Peter Wilson, a pilot with a big black mark against him, the perfect man for the job they wanted done.

Now, we were approaching the airport. I banked left, pushing the props up. "Flap. Fifteen degrees."

"Fifteen." Billy was still looking unhappy. "About the engine—that was a revolting development."

"Forget it; it's a test flight." I gave him a grin. "What's your diagnosis, doctor?"

"Tired," said Billy. "It's a G.2, which dates it back practically to the Wright brothers, and it's done twelve hundred hours since overhaul." He regarded me curiously. "You've done a lot of time in these crates, eh?"

I didn't answer. My hands felt tense and uncertain on the controls. Consciously I relaxed, easing off power

"Full flap," I ordered.

"Flaps coming down."

We floated over the trees. I levelled out, and the plane settled gently, touched and rolled.

"Very tasty," Billy said thoughtfully. "Very tasty indeed."

We were pulling off the runway in a cloud of dust when I spotted the jeep parked next to the hangar. Taylor McEwen sat at the wheel, her fair hair bright in the slanting sun.

"Some girl, eh?" said Billy. He craned out of the window as I braked to a stop.

"Greetings, boss!" he shouted.

Tay waved and started across the strip towards us. She had a man's name, which may be an old Australian custom, but there wasn't any question about her sex. Even in trousers and shirt she moved with an unconscious feminine grace; a tall girl, full-bodied, with a lovely, fine-planed face and worry lurking behind her brown eyes.

"Nice landing, Peter," she said. I liked that, the clear Aussie voice saying my name. "How's the plane?"

"Finest single-engined aircraft in the western Pacific," I said.

"Don't worry, Miss McEwen," Billy said consolingly. "There's nothing wrong with the machine that a new engine won't cure."

"Oh." Tay's face clouded. Then she turned to me again. "Scott's here," she said. "He came down overland. He wants to see you."

That was interesting. Scott Monson, in charge of the mine since Tay's father had died, was short-handed because of native desertions. He'd been waiting two weeks—ever since I'd arrived—for me to fly in replacements, and Monson was not known as a patient man.

I slipped out of my seat. "You button up, will you, Billy?" I said.

"Yes, sir." The little man's customary grin

faded. "If Monson would keep his boots off the fuzzy-tops' backsides," he observed darkly, "they might stay longer."

The hot copper sun dipped low in the west as Tay and I sped along in the jeep over the narrow road into the town. With the quick tropical dusk came an offshore breeze, ruffling the glassy blue of the bay. We topped a rise and Tay slowed down, looking at the view.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" she said.

So was she, her sun-streaked hair blowing and cheeks faintly rose-stained beneath the tan.

But the worry was still there in her eyes.

"Tay," I said. "It's none of my business, but I'd be glad to help if I can."

She hesitated. Then: "It's nothing, Peter, really," she said. "It's the mine, I suppose. Dad hit a rich vein before he died, but he was deeply in debt. The syndicate, the men who backed him, sent Scott out to help, but we're not producing even now. And the mine was Dad's whole life. I'd hate to lose it."

"And the mortgage is coming due?"

I meant that humorously, but she didn't take it that way. "Something like that," she said unhappily, and pulled up before a frame building on Port Wisdom's main street.

I sat where I was and looked at Tay. She was young, twenty-two or -three, and she'd spent her life in mining camps at the ends of the earth. I'd never even seen her in a dress. And yet she was a beautiful woman.

I said: "That crack of mine—it was stupid." Impulsively I put my hand on her arm. It was meant to be a friendly gesture, but somehow it was suddenly more than that.

For a long moment, Tay's eyes met mine. Then she looked away.

"Scott's waiting," she said.

IN the office of McEwen Mines, Ltd., a single shaded bulb hung in the middle of the room. Beyond its yellow periphery, Scott Monson stood at the window, looking down into the street. He was broad, heavy-muscled, a huge figure in the gathering gloom.

"Mr. Wilson." He sounded displeased. "Good of you to spare me your time."

He swung abruptly into the chair behind the desk, and I saw his face in the light. He was younger than I had imagined—about thirty, lean, strong-jawed, handsome. Only his eyes were wrong. They were rather small, pale, and guarded beneath heavy brows.

"I hope you've been enjoying your stay in Port Wisdom," he continued.

"I don't blame you for wondering," I said. My voice sounded apologetic, but I blundered on. "I assure you, though, that we've done everything we could. I'll have the plane flying as soon as the new engine arrives."

"And in the meantime? The mine may shut down. And something else may go wrong with the plane, eh, Wilson? But you'll still be getting your pay-cheque each week."

"Oh, no. You're mistaken," Tay objected, low-voiced. "I'm sure Peter and Billy have been doing their best."

"Perhaps." Monson spoke with the amused impatience of a tolerant parent, but his next words were a command.

"Now, why don't you go home, Tay, and get ready for dinner?"

She turned away, flushed and unsure. For a moment I thought she wasn't going to obey.

"I'll be along when I can," he said.

The door closed and I turned to find Monson towering over me, leaning on the desk.

"A wonderful girl, Tay," he said. "But unrealistic. All women are." Unexpectedly, he smiled. "All right, then. You'll take off in the morning. I have thirty boys rounded up. You can take that many."

"Yes," I said. "But not tomorrow. The plane's not ready."

Monson said pleasantly: "No, Wilson, you

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**Tay paused at the door, flushed and unsure. It was plain that Monson wanted her to leave us alone. I sat there, watching her but saying nothing. "I'll be along when I can," Monson said**

A chat with a possible client. Jimmy Maxwell loves to prowl around his firm's headquarters in Mayfair

On his way to Paris by Golden Arrow, the boss stops to talk with Gordon White, one of his senior uniformed men. During a year, Maxwell's travels may equal four times round the globe

# Jimmy Maxwell maps out holidays for the world

*by JOHN HARMAN*

**To keep in touch with his giant travel agency, he will go anywhere, anytime—sometimes by jet plane, sometimes by camel**

IN HIS FIFTH-FLOOR OFFICE in London one afternoon, James Maxwell, a tough, friendly Scot with a brisk manner who is general manager of Thos. Cook and Son, decided to visit one of his branches 360 miles away in Glasgow. He caught the three o'clock plane from London Airport, was in conference with his Glasgow manager at six, and a few hours later boarded the night train for London. He was back in his office, dealing with the day's mail, by eight the next morning.

With a similar lack of hesitation, but at longer notice, Maxwell frequently leaves for New York, Cape Town, Auckland or anywhere else abroad. "To him, Tokyo is not the other side of the globe, but merely a couple of days away by Comet," says Roy Kirk, his personal assistant. "He has no conception of distance whatever." Once, Maxwell telephoned London from Egypt to dictate a letter. Recently he booked a seat for the first passenger rocket to the moon.

Known to friends and colleagues as the most travelled man in travel business, "Jimmy" Maxwell covers 100,000 miles and more a year. "We have, with associate companies, more than 350 branches in sixty-four countries. I like to maintain personal contact with all of them," he explains. To call on a Cook's representative in the Arabian desert, he once did twenty miles by camel.

This urge for keeping on the move, sustained by a strong determination to succeed in his profession, has dominated Maxwell's life. Starting as a thirty-shillings-a-week booking clerk at the age of seventeen, he eventually worked in sixty-six branches throughout the Cook empire.

At twenty-eight, he went to Bombay as assistant general manager of all the company's interests in the East. "It soon became clear that nothing less than the top of the ladder would satisfy his ambition," says a friend. When he took over his present post six years ago, shortly before Cooks was nationalized, he was the youngest general manager in his firm's history.

Now forty-nine, with alert blue eyes, a florid, shiny complexion and a stocky, barrel-chested physique which he developed as a wrestling champion in his teens, Maxwell refuses to slow down.

### The Day He Lost His Voice

"If he has little to do in his own office, he prowls into neighbouring offices, picking papers off desks and studying them," says one executive. "We tried to cure him of this habit by clearing the tops of our desks, but the next time he came in he rifled the drawers instead."

Maxwell maintains that the frequent emergencies in travel business prevent him from relaxing. "If a ship's sailing is delayed or an airport is fogbound, passengers have to be looked after. Decisions cannot be put off until next day."

Between spells of relentless globe-trotting, Maxwell rules the Cook headquarters in Mayfair with a firm hand. He drives subordinates hard—they reckon that their quietest day was when he lost his voice—and believes in delegating authority. "Initiative is vital in the travel industry, especially for staff in direct contact with clients," he says. "Usually, crises have to be solved on the spot."

As a Cook's representative in Italy before the war, he was once called upon to arrange travel for a wealthy Indian who was leaving Venice for Calais accompanied by sixty servants. Maxwell

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# Frank Bricknell fights an enemy stronger than steel

*by FRANKLIN RUSSELL*

**In his war against rust, he needs all the help science can give him. For rust, silent, hidden, can kill—and often does**

EARLY IN 1951 the London County Council found itself in trouble when it shifted a century-old statue of a lion to make way for the new Festival Hall on the south bank of the Thames. The lion seemed about to fall to pieces because the internal iron framework had rusted.

The council, remembering that King George VI had asked that the lion should be preserved, called in a London corrosion expert, Frank Bricknell, who discovered a concealed trapdoor in the rump of the seven-ton animal. He ordered it to be opened, and inside the lion's stomach he found a sealed beer bottle.

"There was great excitement," Bricknell recalls. "The lion was made of coade stone, a material which could be moulded like clay but which set like granite. As the secret died with its inventor, it was thought that the bottle might contain the formula for the stone."

But when the bottle was opened at an official ceremony it was found to contain only a note, dated May 24, 1837, commemorating Princess Victoria's birthday. Bricknell did not share the general disappointment. By recommending a drastic chemical treatment, he was able to save the lion from a corrosive death.

Bricknell, a bushy-eyebrowed Londoner, has been actively fighting the march of rust in industry for the past ten years, mainly using new chemical processes. He understands its destructive power and has seen it break down brick walls, buckle steel buildings, lift concrete floors and split sheets of steel. The British Iron and Steel Research Association recently reported that to protect the country's yearly steel output from rust would take 50,000,000 gallons of paint applied by 16,000 painters working throughout the year.

"As it is," says Bricknell, "rust costs British industry £6 a second—£200 million a year—because there are too few men interested in corrosion."

## Treated A Suit Of Armour

As destruction by rust is insidious, silent and undramatic, Bricknell has great difficulty in convincing his friends that he does not have a job which is desk-bound and dull.

In one twenty-four hour period recently he treated ships at Troon in Scotland, and at Schiedam in Holland. He once dealt with a suit of battle armour worth £8,000 which formerly belonged to Sir John Peche, one of Henry VIII's jousting champions. "Rust moves slowly," he says, "but it can produce the most dramatic results."

He expects it to operate in devious ways. On a visit last year to the Vale of Evesham he found that rust was smashing thousands of glasshouse panes in the market-gardening communities. "Rust blisters, forming on the steel frames under the putty, have caused the breakages," he reported to his firm.

Bricknell has to battle against apathy and ignorance about rust. When called to examine a new thousand-ton freighter in Scotland he found that it looked like a battered tramp steamer. The ship's sides were blotched with rust and long strips of fresh paint hung down. "The painters had painted over corroding steel," Bricknell recalls. "A coating of paint does nothing to halt corrosion that has already begun. It cost £1,000 to clean up that mess."

A patented chemical process of rust treatment which Bricknell's firm calls "jenolizing" is now used throughout the world. Chemicals are applied by brush and by dipping in tanks to remove rust and to delay its recurrence. "We know now it isn't enough to strip off the rust

**In the laboratory, Bricknell watches Sylvia Benson, one of his firm's chemists, at work**

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

night chill seemed to have crept into her very bones and she stood shivering. The fire was dying down by the wagon and she could see the immense figures of van Blerck and his sons beside it and, taut with anxiety, she watched.

The dawn came suddenly. Almost without warning the sky to the east was soft and flooding with light, and in the first flush of the light she heard, very faint and far away, a shot.

In the cold, crystalline air she watched as, slowly, the oxen were brought in by the boys and yoked. Van Blerck and his elder son sat by the fire that the boys had built up out of the night's ashes, the younger son busied himself about the oxen. There was no sign of Jonathan.

Presently the last of the oxen was in position. They stood there silently, not moving, not lying down. She could feel no anxiety now but only a sense of fatality, as if this moment were predordained, as if it were a part of the history and purpose of the land.

Into that moment Stopford came riding. Across his saddle-bow there was a young *rietbok*: it hung limply. His gun was in the bucket and he held it loosely with one hand, riding easily. To Lisette it seemed that he must have made a detour to come up towards the house past the point where van Blerck's wagon was outspanned, and she felt a thrill of pride.

The elder son saw him first and Lisette watched him speak to his father. The old man turned and called out, and she heard his heavy voice:

*"Engelsman!"*

Stopford eased his horse over towards the fire and, sitting in the saddle, looked down at them from four yards away.

The old man spoke again and she could hear the deep rumble of the voice but could not make out the words. The elder son stood up, but did not move from his place. She saw Stopford pat the carcass of the buck. Then, after a minute, she saw him raise his hand—the hand that held the rein, not the gun—in a little gesture of farewell, and the horse moved forward again. He turned up past the *hartebeesthuis* and disappeared from her sight.

Quietly, stiffly, and suddenly aware again of the biting keenness of the morning air, Lisette came away from the angle in the walls where she had stood and walked slowly towards the house. She felt very tired, as if emotion had passed out of her. Stopford had won the victory, but there was no elation in her, only a foreboding.

LEMAIRE frowned. "Yes, I met them at the outspan at the Klip River drift. Van Blerck spoke to me about you."

Stopford asked slowly: "What did he say?"

"He said that I was a fool for harbouring an English spy."

"Well?"

"If it were van Blerck only," said Lemaire, "it would not matter. He is a fool and a bigot. But I heard it also at Joubert's. There was talk about you there. Half the men think that you are a spy. In this district we are very political"—he smiled wryly—"when it does not affect our immediate interests. How, do you think, has this spy story got about?"

Stopford waited before he spoke, but at length he said reluctantly: "I think that Jonathan has put the idea into the minds of the people about here."

Lemaire gazed at him expressionlessly.

"When did Jonathan see van Blerck?"

"Lisette says that Jonathan was there, from something that van Blerck's elder son said, about ten days ago."

"Lisette believes that they were trying to force a quarrel with you—perhaps to kill you?"

Stopford nodded.

"Do you think that yourself?"

"Yes."

"Lisette is very young. She has not had much experience of men and their quarrels."

"That also is true," agreed Stopford. "They were quiet when I rode back."

"You had the gun and the horse," said Lemaire reflectively. "Still, it may be that there was exaggeration. Things in the night are different from things in the day. It may be only that they meant to throw you in the dam."

"I think that is likely."

"Ah!" Again Lemaire sat quiet, contemplating the long, falling line of the veld beyond the dam.

With a sudden urgency Stopford exclaimed: "Can't you stop this story?"

Lemaire answered reasonably: "Oh, no! It is much too late for that. The question is whether we can mend it."

They sat quietly, not talking, for a long while and then Lemaire said: "You see, Anthony, they do not trust me either—not fully. I have still the house at the Cape, though I have not seen it for more than fifteen years: I have money there. These things are bad. But I have been to England, which is worse, and I married an English wife, which was worst of all. And there is one other thing: I have a cabinet in the living-room"—Stopford felt a faint note of bitterness creeping into the voice—"and in it I keep pieces of porcelain and of pewter which I do not use. I keep them for their beauty—and no other man in all the Transvaal has a cabinet of beauty. I think that that is even more heavy in its effect than the English wife I married. I might well harbour an English spy!"

"You don't think . . . ?"

Lemaire smiled sadly. "On the contrary, I think all the time, but I know that you are not a spy, Anthony."

JONATHAN'S horse worked its way down the *kloof* with caution. He rode in a mood of intense exhilaration through the soft air. The night chills had gone but the day was not yet hot.

This thing that had begun in spite had crystallized out of spite into a plan. The whole district was aware now of Stopford. The younger men had accepted Jonathan's suggestion at once; even the older men believed now; and there was so little that he had had to do. Once he had called Stopford "spy," the story had spread of its own malice. There was a contagion of fear on the High Veld, a contagion of hatred. It was not necessary to blow on the flames. This wind rose of its own accord. It would end in one way only—the removal of Stopford.

There were many obstacles between him and the gold. Stopford was the first of these. He had hoped at first for Stopford's co-operation, but that was not possible. That in itself to him was proof that Stopford had his own plans; that his compliance, his falling in with Lemaire's irrational notion, was part of a deeper scheme of his own.

It would be better, he thought coldly and without passion, if Stopford were dead. Driven out, he would not come back, could not come back; but he might send others. Even the breathing of the word "gold" would be enough.

He could see the Bezuidenhout homestead now. It was a small place, hardly bigger than Lemaire's *hartebeesthuis,* mud-walled, grass-roofed, square, utilitarian and ugly. The place had an unkempt look, unlived-in, unloved. The woman who greeted him was slatternly and unlovable also.

Bezuidenhout himself had the air of a tethered gipsy, a hardly concealed wildness, as if no more chained him to this place of walls than the necessity for driving in the oxen. His two younger sons and his three daughters had the same foot-loose air about them. It was as if a caravan had stopped and taken to the ground. Oddly, his eldest son had a wide solidity. He was bigger than his father, bigger than either of his brothers; his forehead broader, his eyes set wider apart. Jonathan had come to see him.

**Stopford held Lisette gently in his arms. Her**

It was Bezuidenhout himself who, over coffee, brought the matter to a head. "How is your Englishman?"

Jonathan said: "He's not my Englishman. It's my father who keeps him."

"So I heard at Joubert's. Is he an English spy?"

Jonathan made a sweep with his hands. "How should I know? Why does he come here else?"

"To build dams?"

"His dam would not hold enough water for my tobacco!"

Bezuidenhout began to laugh with the heavy

lothes were ripped, her flesh scratched and bleeding; she was only half conscious. As he faced the hysterical women, a terrible anger possessed him

slow laughter of a man who had a sense only of the ludicrous. "Is it your tobacco that makes you hate him?"

For a moment, Jonathan was silent. Then he answered easily: "The tobacco's nothing. I sowed enough only to see that it could be grown. The plants were healthy until the drought killed them. I know what I want to know. That's all."

"What is it then?"

"I have nothing against him," said Jonathan. "At least. . . ." He stopped and the older man asked: "At least what?"

Jonathan looked straight at him. "At least I do not want an Englishman for a brother-in-law." He did not look at the eldest son, but he was conscious instantly of the quick movement that the man made.

Bezuidenhout's wife said: "Your mother was an Englishwoman."

"That," returned Jonathan simply, "I could not help, but this I can."

"Use him for your dam and send him away!" One of the younger boys spoke practically.

"And there is my father," said Jonathan.

"Why does he keep him?" Bezuidenhout demanded at once.

"I don't know. It's just, I think, that he believes what the Englishman says."

"He was too long in England himself." Bezuidenhout spoke with finality and the subject dropped.

Later, when they went out into the darkness before going to bed, Jacobus, the eldest son, said over his shoulder: "And what does Lisette say?"

"Anything is possible with a girl. He is new. He comes from outside. He talks to her and she believes. . . ."

"So!" said Jacobus, the syllable long drawn out and curiously full of anger.

Jonathan went to bed satisfied.

The Bezuidenhouts' farm and Jangroentjiesfontein were not contiguous. Between them ran a long wedge of unclaimed land, but Stopford was well inside Lemaire's boundary when he saw the eldest of Bezuidenhout's sons, Jacobus. The track he was riding on went past

*Continued on page* 28

# THE GOLDEN FOOL

*by* ***DAVID DIVINE***

ILLUSTRATED BY E. J. PETTS

**They were finished with talking. If he didn't go now he would get a bullet in the neck. And the women were ready to deal with Lisette**

IN THE MIDDLE of the night, Lisette Lemaire came to Stopford's room—to warn him. Her brother was planning to attack him early next morning—perhaps to kill him. . . .

Anthony Stopford, a young English prospector, was staying at the Lemaires' farm on the South African veld. He had found gold nearby, but had never staked a claim. Out of gratitude to old Lemaire, Lisette's father, who had saved his life, he had stayed to help on the farm—and to absorb the Boer way of life. He saw now that gold-mines would ruin these simple, devout farmers. And there was something else: he had fallen in love with Lisette.

Stopford had built a dam to bring water to the Lemaires' cattle. Old Lemaire and his elder son Andries were well pleased with it; but Jonathan, the younger boy, was bitterly contemptuous. He had heady ambitions to irrigate the whole area for tobacco growing: unlike the rest of the family, he was crazy to make money. He had tried desperately to pick Stopford's brains and exploit the gold. When old Lemaire heard of this, he told Jonathan grimly that if ever he betrayed the gold, he would shoot him—his own son.

Jonathan's frustration turned to fanatical spite. He branded Stopford as "an English spy," and systematically inflamed the whole countryside against him. Then one night he brought his friends the van Blercks to the farm. With taunts and insults they tried to provoke Stopford to a fight—in vain. Long after he had retired to bed, Stopford heard their angry voices.

Late that night, Lisette came to him with her warning—and a plan. To avoid Jonathan and his friends, he must go out hunting before dawn. Then, when he returned, he could face them—with a rifle. . . .

## PART 4

### *"Englishman, Come Out!"*

A FORMLESS gathering of cloud had wiped out all the stars. The night before the dawn was suddenly become intolerably dark. Lisette could hear through her window the hammering on the door and the shouts of *"Engelsman kom uit!"*—Englishman come out! And then, over and over again: *"Spion, verdomde spion!"*—spy, damned spy!

They had been awake all night, Jonathan with them, drinking. The voices were thick and guttural and very angry. Presently she heard kicking, then the crash of wood as the door splintered and drove inwards. She heard come into the confused noises a baffled note, something almost querulous, and she knew that Tooni had gone.

She dressed quickly and went out to the *stoep*. It was very cold in the darkness. The

**"This is my message—that you leave Lisette alone!" He flung the words out savagely at Stopford and swung round, jerking the reins**

With his depot manager, Douglas Hodges, Bricknell examines a Bren-gun carrier eaten by rust

A spray gun adds the final touch to the de-rusting

by chipping or brushing," Bricknell says. "The rust goes on working, eating away the metal under the fresh paint."

Rust is ordinary steel in the process of reverting to the ore from which it was made. It occurs wherever there is moisture, and is accelerated by atmospheres impregnated with sulphur dioxide and ammoniates ("smog") and sodium chloride (salt). In the aggressive atmosphere of Sheffield, an untreated mild-steel plate one-eighth of an inch thick would be almost completely destroyed during ten years' exposure. In both Manchester and Sheffield, Bricknell is accustomed to finding zinc galvanizing no protection against what he calls "the acid air."

"Only in areas of low humidity or low temperature, such as Khartoum or northern Sweden, is the rust rate negligible," he says.

Often, visible rusting is nothing compared to the serious deterioration of the metal that is proceeding out of sight. When steel is produced, particularly by the hot rolling process, a skin known as millscale is formed on the finished product. Because it is a skin and not an integral part of the metal, corrosion is possible underneath it.

When Bricknell began treating ruggedly built Sherman and Centurion tanks recently, he was astonished to find that one of the first vehicles he examined, a veteran of Korea, was unsalvageable. "The army had kept it well painted," he says, "and yet it was ready to fall apart. Jolting had loosened the millscale, allowing rust to form underneath the paint."

### Where Rust Means Disaster

He examines all rust jobs personally so that he can make recommendations to ensure that a chemically clean surface is created. He is scornful of conventional rust removal methods such as wire-brushing, scraping or flame-cleaning. He claims that none of these systems alone reaches deeply embedded corrosion or awkwardly placed rust patches. "Chipping, scraping and sand-blasting drive rust particles even deeper into the metal," he says.

When he orders application of his firm's patented chemical solution, which has a phosphoric acid base, it is to create a passive phosphate coating in place of the rust. He says that this anchors subsequent coats of paint, making them resistant to impact, abrasion and flaking. In stubborn cases, Bricknell uses a combination of anti-rust systems, beginning by brushing, sand-blasting or burning off surface rust, then working chemical into the metal with brushes.

Because the lives of thousands of people depend daily on hidden pieces of metal remaining undamaged by corrosion, Bricknell urges regular and skilled inspections to avoid tragedies. He keeps a record of disasters involving rust. On January 19, 1952, a rail footbridge at Bury, Lancashire, collapsed with nearly two hundred people on it. One died and one hundred were injured. On examination, many hidden iron components of the bridge were found to be severely corroded.

When a Central African Airways Viking airliner crashed in March, 1953, killing thirteen people, an inquiry revealed that bolts holding the wings had not been cadmium-plated and corrosion had attacked the mainspar of the wing, reducing its resistance to fatigue.

"A £10,000 propeller shaft in an ocean-going freighter was once allowed to corrode in places," say Bricknell. "The huge shaft broke, punched a hole in the side of the ship and nearly sank it."

Pollution of city air is not only a problem for health authorities. Bricknell is interested, too. "It's not surprising that fog damages the lungs," he says. "It rots steel girders." Fog contains sulphuric acid. Regular applications of heavy tar paint cannot always stop this atmospheric destruction. After a workman had crashed three floors to his death when a ladder gave way in London recently, Bricknell found the steel almost totally oxidized under countless layers of heavy black paint.

Because Bricknell specializes in marine corrosion he regards pollution of the sea as seriously as he does poisoning of the air. He was recently called to examine the advanced corrosion of a coastal freighter which had been in service only two years. Sixteen of its plates were condemned.

"In most harbours," Bricknell explains, "acid effluents from factories are common. At Newcastle this ship was probably subjected to hydrochloric acid pollution. At Swansea, ammonium chloride and sulphurous acid swung into the attack. At another port, a factory makes the air so filthy with acid that it encrusts the moist waterline of any ship."

Destruction of a piece of metal may take two years—or two hundred. The railings surrounding Westminster Abbey were erected in 1746 and developed rotting only at the joints. Three years ago the Margate Winter Gardens, built in 1911, were threatened by rust. Gigantic steel girders, fifty-six feet by three feet six inches, were found to be dangerously corroded when the roof was opened up. In places the corrosion had eaten nearly a quarter of an inch into the metal.

### The Factory That Burst

Through experiences like this Bricknell knows that there is danger when metal is concealed behind cement or brick structures. If moisture can reach such metal, swelling begins as layer upon layer of rust "grows" on the metal's surface.

In one nearly new factory which Bricknell investigated, the four corners of the brick building had burst away from rusted steel uprights. "The owner was most annoyed," Bricknell recalls. "He had specified a steel framework for long life, but he hadn't told the architect that steam would keep the metal almost continually moist."

Bricknell claims that he is making progress in persuading shipowners that chemical pre-treatment methods can save thousands of pounds, but he cannot report similar success with the building trade. "The life of concrete buildings reinforced by steel could be lengthened immeasurably if the steel were pre-treated against rust."

Now Bricknell spends a lot of time trying to convince architects and consulting engineers that posterity will prove that he is right and they are wrong. THE END

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## JIMMY MAXWELL MAPS OUT HOLIDAYS FOR THE WORLD

*Continued from page 18*

persuaded the railway company to provide a five-coach train of the newest and most luxurious rolling stock. He organized an impressive farewell ceremony. Local police formed a bodyguard—"the theatre missed a born impresario when Jimmy went into travel," says a friend—and he escorted his client to the railway station. The Indian climbed into a compartment, glanced at the seating—and dismounted indignantly.

"I had forgotten to check on the upholstery," Maxwell admits. "It was pigskin. As an orthodox Mohammedan, the client refused to sit on it. I had to charter another train."

A restless and critical-minded traveller, continually searching for faults, Maxwell has said that his first action on entering a railway carriage is to see if the lavatories and washbasins are functioning properly. Sir Alexander Maxwell, chairman of the British Travel and Holidays Association, who is unrelated to Maxwell, says: "He hates anything tatty in hotels and is always fingering tablecloths and examining cutlery."

Sometimes, this obsession for the smaller details of personal comfort leads Maxwell into reverting to his original job as a booking clerk. He studies maps, time-tables and hotel prices to plan holidays for friends.

When he learned that the secretary of a business acquaintance was getting married and had booked a modest Continental honeymoon through Cook's, Maxwell secretly took over the travel arrangements. "At his own expense, he changed it into a lavish Hollywood affair, complete with flowers and special couriers. The couple were flabbergasted," says Duncan Haws, then Maxwell's personal assistant.

Where his own holidays are concerned, however, Maxwell confesses that he prefers them quiet. He takes his wife Anne and two sons, John, aged ten, and Douglas, seven, to Nairn, a small town near Inverness.

### Booked Entire Hotel

Some of the busiest months in his career, he recalls, were when he brought Indian princes to London for the 1937 Coronation. "I was entrusted with priceless crown jewels."

The princes, who had retinues which included doctors, secretaries, valets, musicians and court jesters, added to Maxwell's difficulties by competing with each other for the best accommodation. One of them took over an entire hotel—but trouble arose with the proprietor when he lit camp fires on a valuable lawn in the garden.

Cook's have an Eastern Princes department—separate from the V.I.P. department, which handles travel for the Duke of Windsor, Sir Winston Churchill and other Western notabilities—but its activities have dwindled latterly. Eastern royalty tend to travel alone nowadays, says Maxwell. Some prefer to remain incognito. One Indian princess gave her Cook's courier the slip by darting from the back entrance of her hotel and wandering round the London shops. She returned loaded with £40-worth of cheap trinkets bought in a multiple store.

Several years ago, while sailing to India, Maxwell had to act as an undertaker. An Indian prince died on board ship and, for religious reasons, his servants pleaded with Maxwell not to let the captain bury the body at sea. "I put the body in a bath, packed it with ice, and saw it ashore at the next port."

Ordinarily, corpses are handled by Cook's shipping and forwarding department, along with passengers' luggage and other cargo such as theatrical sets, circus animals, bloodstock and rare snakes. Unusual shipments to Paris include the Lord Mayor of London's state coach and horses, and the entire furnishings of an office which were transferred from London in a day. "The staff of 160 travelled on the Golden Arrow. When they arrived at their new address, inkwells had been filled and the morning's mail had been sorted."

### The Two Mink Coats

A scholastic department is another of Cook's sidelines. For a minimum fee of about £500 a year, the children of kings, rajahs, millionaires, film stars, planters and other clients who cannot stay in Britain are schooled, clothed, issued with pocket money, entertained during holidays and cared for generally. "One of our tasks," says Maxwell, "is admonishing fabulously rich young men when they get bad reports at the end of term."

Pandering to rich clients has involved Maxwell in odd assignments. An American sent him to the River Jordan to fill five hundred bottles with holy water. Another, who had tired of a woman friend, gave him the task of buying her off.

Maxwell deals personally with his more distinguished clients, but he has learned that the affairs of wealthy people sometimes need delicate handling. A test in diplomacy concerned a pair of mink coats worth £12,000 each. A well-to-do client who was living in Paris bought one of the coats for his wife. Later, he telephoned Maxwell and asked him to buy an identical coat for a girl friend. Maxwell did so, but in error the second coat was delivered to the wife instead of to the friend. The husband implored Maxwell to calm his wife's suspicions.

"I immediately flew to Paris and had tea with the wife," he recalls. "I said that the second coat was of course intended for her, since it would have been a pity if she had lost the first one—which had suited her so well.

"She listened to my story. Then she said: 'I don't believe a word. Anyway, I've got two coats now—and I'm keeping them.'"

THE END

## THE IMPOSSIBLE FLIGHT

*Continued from page 17*

don't understand. We've a great deal at stake. Miss McEwen's interest in the mine, in fact."

Suddenly the smile vanished and Monson's voice became bullying. "So you'll make that flight. Not next week or the week after. You'll make it tomorrow."

I stared at him and remembered what Billy had said. Monson was rough on his mine-workers, so they melted away; disappeared into the bush. Now he needed more. Well, that was his worry. The aeroplane was mine.

"Sorry," I said stubbornly. "I'd like to help."

"And you will. It seems you're not very realistic, either. Fortunately, I am. I took the trouble to look into your record, Wilson, and I found an interesting item you forgot to mention in your application to McEwen. I could use that information to prevent you getting a flying job anywhere out here. But I'd hate to do that, unless you persist in being unreasonable."

I faced him, feeling the hot, futile anger rise in my throat. "Is that all?" I said.

"Except for one thing. Tay. We're engaged. Stay away from her, Wilson."

That made sense, and it had nothing to do with his being in love with Tay. If he had Tay, he had everything. No split with the syndicate once the mine got going.

I got up and left.

THEY served good Australian beer at Port Wisdom's apology for a hotel, but that night I couldn't enjoy it. I found myself a chair at the shadowy end of the veranda and watched the moon rise over the mud flats. Its tropical brilliance failed to inspire. Monson, I reflected, had me over a barrel. I'd make the flight next day; that wasn't what depressed me. It was the thought of Tay getting tied up with him.

I was just going to bed in disgust when Billy came along and took the chair next to mine.

"What's up, Pete?" Billy asked. "You don't look too bright to me."

I made some sort of a noise.

"Come on," Billy said. "What is it?"

"Monson," I told him, "wants me to make that flight tomorrow."

"Well," Billy said, "you can't live for ever."

"Not," I agreed, "with a lout like Monson around——" I broke off. Tay was coming up the veranda steps. Her blonde hair was piled in a thick knot on top of her head; she wore a green summer dress and high heels, and in Port Wisdom, New Guinea, the effect was pretty staggering.

She smiled brightly. "Good evening."

"Hallo, Tay," I said.

"Well, well," Billy said. "I've just remembered I've got to see a man about something—a Scotch-and-soda, I think."

He scuttled away towards the bar, leaving an awkward silence behind him. I wasn't in conversational mood. And I had an idea why Tay had come.

"Well—what's on your mind?" I asked, churlishly.

Tay said, "I've been talking to Billy——"

"And Billy talks too much."

"It's about the plane." Tay's smile wavered. "Do you think it's safe, Peter?"

"No, I don't," I said. "And what makes you think I'm going to fly it?"

"I—I don't know." She flushed angrily. "I didn't mean to bother you."

"No bother," I said. "I'll take you home."

Port Wisdom's streets cleared early. There were only a few scattered lights to be seen, an occasional low voice from some shaded porch, and our footsteps ringing loud and lonely beneath the branches of the trees.

Tay stopped suddenly. "You needn't come any farther," she said. "And I'm sorry you're angry. You shouldn't be."

"I'm not angry."

She hesitated, glancing up at me with a little smile. "Well, good night," she said.

Suddenly she was in my arms. I kissed her. She returned my kiss. It was unrehearsed, but sensational.

"Oh, dear." Tay's voice trembled. "I feel a bit dizzy."

"If you're wondering," I said shakily, "—don't. I have a feeling this isn't just one of those little things."

"I have the same feeling," she said. Then the words came pouring out breathlessly. "But, Peter, I'm afraid! I've been so stupid. There's Scott—and the mine. If only. . . ."

"If only. . . ." I echoed slowly, coming back to my senses. "You mean, if only I'd make that flight tomorrow?"

"Yes, that would help."

I understood then. The idea clicked in my mind with the gentle concussion of a couple of express trains meeting head-on.

I said: "I see. Well—it was a wonderful performance, Tay, but you needn't have bothered. I was going to make the flight anyway."

"What? I don't understand. . . ."

She was still playing the part, and playing it well. Her eyes were bewildered.

"Do you want me to draw you a diagram?" I asked rudely. "Look, my dear—you just go home and tell your boy-friend it worked. Tell him it worked wonderfully."

I'd have liked it better if she'd slapped me. Instead, she stood there, staring up at me unhappily.

"Oh, Peter!" she said. . . .

I FOUND it hard to sleep that night, but I must have dozed off eventually, because, when I came to, Billy was shaking me.

"Wake up, chum," he said, "and forget your worries."

It was a lovely morning, the dawn fresh and still cool and the sky all pink in the east.

I felt terrible.

We had breakfast, changed into our working clothes and fuelled the plane. Then we checked the plugs and mags on number one engine and ran it up. It sounded rough to me; I didn't like it. I didn't like it at all. As far as I was concerned it was an impossible flight. But it looked as if it would have to *be* possible. . . .

By eleven o'clock we were ready to leave.

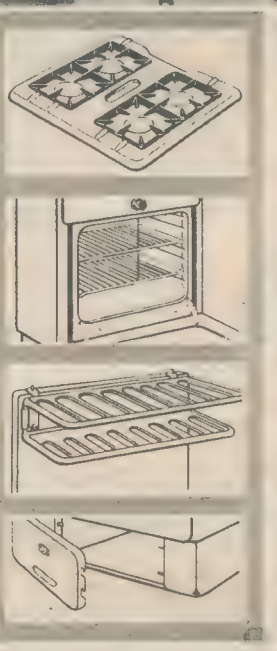
Monson herded thirty Papuans and their gear aboard, to the lamentations of their assembled relatives.

I left Billy in the cockpit and went to check the exits. The rear door was shut, and Tay was sitting beside it on a flour-sack.

I reached for the door handle. "All ashore, Miss McEwen."

"Oh, I'm coming along." She surveyed me with the cool distaste of

"D'you mind, old man?"



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someone who has just smelled a dead fish. "You seem to think I talked you into something. I might as well find out what."

I shrugged. "Suit yourself."

Back in the cockpit, I started the engines while Monson, wearing a big .45 slung on his hip, watched every move. We ran through the routine check and I taxied out and lined up with the plane's tail on the boundary fence.

The airstrip was short and it was a hot, windless day, which made it even shorter. I couldn't afford to waste any runway.

"Props are up. Mixtures rich." I gave the cockpit a last, careful inspection. "Controls free and clear."

"Let's go, Wilson." Monson was impatient.

I took my time.

I said: "Look, Billy. I'm going to get this crate up to single-engine flying speed before I leave the ground. You watch the gauges and handle the throttles after thirty inches. All right?"

"Right," said Billy.

I eased the throttles open. The engines muttered, picked up to a roar, and the airframe shook, straining, as I held it stationary with the brakes. I released them and the plane lurched, jerking forward in a rolling start.

"Thirty inches! You've got 'em, Billy."

Billy continued the smooth forward movement of the throttles, and I looked up, watching the trees at the other end of the airfield come towards me across the runway; at first slowly, then faster and faster.

"Forty inches. Wide open."

The plane wanted to fly. I kept her tail up, her wheels on the ground, fighting for airspeed.

"Ninety, Pete."

Not enough. The jungle became a green blur, closing in with a rush.

"One—oh—five."

That was it. Gently I eased back on the yoke. The wings lifted. With a great surge of power the plane rose, straining skyward, and soared out smoothly over the trees.

"Gear up."

Billy lifted the handle and the wheels banged into the wells.

"Rated power. Thirty-seven inches. Twenty-fifty r.p.m."

THE engines stopped roaring and started to sing. I turned. Monson stood behind me, clutching the bulkhead in a death-grip. His eyes weren't as sure as usual.

"What are you trying to prove, Wilson?" he yelled.

I grinned. "Ever been up forrard here on a take-off before?"

"What's the difference?" Sulkily, he started back towards the cabin.

It had felt good, getting into the air again. For a while it had taken my mind off Tay. Now I was thinking about her again. I reached for the chart, trying to shut her image out of my mind.

The McEwen mine was a tiny pencilled circle a hundred and ten air-miles due west of Port Wisdom, in the great, half-explored interior that was blocked out in yellow on the chart: *Caution—relief data incomplete.*

We levelled out at five thousand feet and I pointed the nose of the plane north-west. I was taking the long way round, sticking to the charted terrain near the coast while I could. We were flying above jungle. To the east the rocky pinnacles of the Finisterre Range shut out the sea. On our left lay the high plateau and the clouds, the great cumulo-nimbus that billowed towards heaven over the trackless back-country; scattered, gigantic, each a wild, turbulent air-world of its own.

After half an hour the flat jungle narrowed, gave way to low, rolling hills—a sort of divide. Then it opened again, and through it a silver, serpentine watercourse wandered—the Ramu River. To the north I caught a glimpse of the sea at Madang. This was where we turned inland and started to climb.

"Call Tay," I told Billy. "I may need some direction."

By the time Billy got back with Tay we were at seven thousand feet and the hills ahead were rising to meet us. This was jungle, too, but of a different kind. It was rugged up-and-down jungle, ripped by ravines and rock-slides, its canyons hidden in heat-mist.

We topped the Bismarck Range at eighty-five hundred, a bare five hundred feet above a chaotic jumble of moss-hung undergrowth. A great valley opened, running north and south, encircled by mountains. At its far end, thirty miles away, stood the high ramparts of the Waghi Divide. And, pushed against those hills by the wind from the sea, rising to an incredible 40,000 feet, a line of towering cumulus reached for the sky.

"There's a pass here." Tay pointed to the chart. "At the south end of the valley. The mine is just beyond."

I took my eyes off the gauges to follow her finger. "How high?"

"About eleven thousand, I think."

We were at 10,500 then, half-way across the valley, and still climbing.

Behind Tay, Monson chuckled. "Still worried, Wilson?"

I started to answer—and then stopped. They say things happen fast in an aircraft. This one didn't. I saw it coming.

So did Billy. "Pete!" he exclaimed. "The cylinder-head temperature on number one!"

BUT I was ahead of him. I reduced number one throttle and trimmed the plane, levelling out. Still the temperature rose. The engine ran normally at two hundred degrees centigrade. Now it jumped to two-twenty—two-twenty-five.

Monson yelled: "What's happening?"

"We're going back," I told him. The mountains behind us were lower. It was our only chance. "We might make Madang."

"Like hell you are!"

With paralysing strength Monson's big hand reached out and gripped my shoulder. I twisted, trying vainly to escape the pain, and saw Tay leaning forward, her eyes wide and frightened.

Then it happened. With a jarring *boom* the cylinder blew and the port engine exploded in flame. The plane shuddered sickeningly, staggered, and dipped off to port. My teeth rattled as I reached up and punched the feathering button. The instruments stopped trying to jump into my lap. I pulled the fire-wall shut-off and $CO_2$ bottle and put on right rudder while Billy cut the mixtures and fuel to number one.

"Rated power on two," I said.

Billy shoved the right throttle up, and I looked around, taking a deep breath. The fire was out, but we'd turned in a half-circle and were heading south again under the looming heights of the Waghi Divide. We couldn't get over them. At 10,000 feet on one engine, we were losing five hundred feet a minute. We couldn't go back over the Bismarcks, either. We would have run out of altitude before we'd recrossed the valley.

That left one thing. A crash-landing. I looked at the matted jungle below, and my heart sank. We wouldn't have a chance.

I flew the plane automatically while my brain raced miles ahead. There must be something I could do—something! But there wasn't.

I turned, and Billy's eyes met mine. His leathery features were grim. Monson rose from the deck beside me, and, behind him, Tay's face was set and pale. There was a fleck of blood on the big man's cheek where he'd banged the bulkhead, and his eyes were wild. Scott Monson was scared. Well—who wasn't?

Monson gasped: "All right, go back."

The sound of my own voice surprised me when it said matter-of-factly: "We're not going back. In about ten minutes I'm going to crash-land this crate."

He glared at me, uncomprehending. I turned back to the controls.

"Pete!" It was Billy, shouting a warning. Monson had the .45 in his fist.

"Damn it!" he shouted. "You're going back! Back to Madang!"

I FACED him. "I'd like to," I said. "But there's a small technical difficulty. With this load we can't hold our altitude."

I watched his eyes shift.

"Then I'll dump the load," he said.

There weren't any parachutes.

"Scott, you can't!" Tay gripped Monson's arm. But he threw her off roughly.

"Don't look so holy, Wilson," he snarled. "You've got fourteen dead to your credit already. What are thirty more fuzzy-tops?" He waved the gun in my face. "You just fly the plane—hear?"

He pushed Tay ahead of him. The cabin door slammed and I sat there, my hands clammy on the controls, Monson's words ringing hot in my brain. Fourteen dead men, women and children. What were thirty more, anyhow?

That was Monson's reality; the law of the jungle. It wasn't mine.

I ripped at my seat belt.

"Can you hold her, Billy?"

"I can try." Billy grinned at me, for the first time that day. "Be careful, Pete."

I heard the screams as I yanked the cabin door open. Revolver in hand, Monson was herding the terrified blacks towards the tail. Then I saw Tay. She had just pulled a wrench out of Billy's canvas toolbag. She saw me, opened her mouth, and I leaped forward, snatched the wrench from her hand, and dashed furiously at Monson with it.

He turned, but too late to use his gun. The wrench smashed down on his skull and he dropped like a poled ox. At the same time the plane lurched violently sideways and I fell against the bulkhead. I scrambled to my feet and dashed towards the cockpit.

"Sorry," said Billy. He had barged into the edge of one of the clouds. "What's happening back there?"

"I've socked Monson," I said, and grabbed the controls.

We broke free, but there was another tremendous cumulus ahead, a grandfather of clouds. It spread more than

# Consider your verdict

*by*

*RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.*

PHILIP BROWN had loved pets since he was a baby; by the time he was twelve he had three of his own—a mongrel puppy, a wood-pigeon and a brown field rabbit.

He had tamed them all to a surprising extent. They followed him wherever he went, and he never bothered to lock them up or tether them. They slept in a wooden hut in the garden.

But one night a freak storm hit the district where Philip lived, and in the morning he found the shed wrecked and his pets gone. For days he searched the countryside with his father, but found no trace.

At last, Mr. Brown promised to buy his heartbroken son another puppy. Together, they journeyed to the nearby town. There, in the crowded market place, the first thing they saw was a rough-looking man standing at the kerbside. On a piece of string was Philip's puppy. The pigeon was in a cage, and the brown rabbit was cooped up in a rough hutch. They were all for sale.

With a cry of joy, Philip sprang forward to greet his pets—but the man pushed him roughly back. "Hey," shouted Philip, "those are my pets. You can't sell them. Give them back to me."

The man refused. As Mr. Brown and Philip became more annoyed, the man finally refused not only to give the pets back, but even to sell them when Mr. Brown offered him the money. The man insisted that as he found the puppy, the pigeon and the rabbit huddled together in his own garden they were his property.

Mr. Brown brought an action against him for the return of his son's property. In court, the man argued that the pets had run away from their former home. "They came on to my land," he said, "and so they became mine."

*What is your verdict? For the legal position, see page 28*

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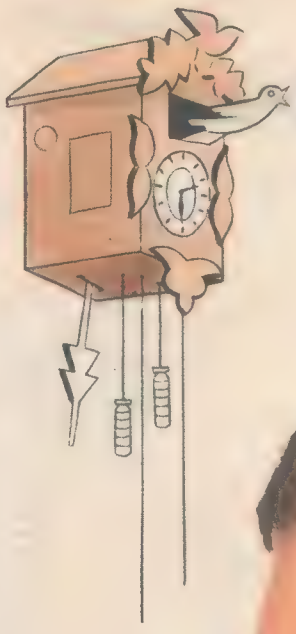

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a mile across at its base. Its top towered a dizzy 50,000 feet over the dwarfed Waghis.

I started to turn again. The fierce vertical air currents in a cloud like that could tear the wings off a plane. They could. . . .

"Billy," I said quietly.

"Yes?" He looked at me blankly.

"Are you a gambler, Billy?"

He shrugged.

"I'm going to fly into that cloud," I said. "We may not come out. We may come out at twenty thousand feet. I've heard of it happening."

"Right," said Billy. He grinned at me crookedly. "But let's come out, eh?"

The solid wall of white was rushing towards us. Like a hand, the shadow of its hanging top touched us first. Then the plane shivered with the impact, lurched and spun crazily—upwards.

I fought the controls. Airspeed—that was the only thing that mattered. Let everything go, except keeping the nose level. Keep the airspeed at 120.

Hail pounded down like a load of bricks. The din on the thin shell of the fuselage was deafening. Carburettor heat—I'd almost forgotten. I couldn't let the engine freeze up. I gave it a full blast and some alcohol for good measure, then turned on the prop de-icer.

The plane fought the controls like an insane thing. It kicked, hesitated, then slammed, quivering, into the next invisible wall.

I was afraid to look at the wings, and the instruments were vibrating too badly to read. I hung on blindly, flying by instinct.

It might have lasted five minutes. It seemed like a lifetime. The last bump was the worst. It shot us screaming out of the cloud, starboard wing down, into blinding sunlight. I blinked and looked out of the window. Then I looked at Billy. He opened his mouth, tried to speak.

"Well, well," he croaked.

THE airstrip at the McEwen mine was a beauty; a mile of firm, grassy runway. It was also easy to get into. Especially from 18,000 feet over the Waghi Divide.

The valley was nice, too; high, cool and verdant, with the big wooden mine headquarters nestled against its slope.

After supper I wandered down to the plane, checked the wheel-chocks, and clambered aboard. Absently, I walked forward and sat down in the pilot's seat.

I was finished with flying. Monson would see to that, once he'd slept off the little headache I'd given him. I ran my fingers fondly over the controls. Once flying had been all there was. Now that had changed. Perhaps because now the ledger balanced. Thirty against the old fourteen.

I'd miss it. But I'd manage.

And Tay. . . .

"Going somewhere?" she asked.

I glanced up at her, startled. Calmly, she seated herself on the arm of the co-pilot's seat, and the clear evening light slanting through the window made a soft, golden halo of her hair.

"I've been thinking I'll have to," I said. "As soon as Monson wakes up."

Tay's eyes were clear and smiling. The old worry in them was gone.

"We've just had a conference," she said. "Billy and Scott and I. We decided it would be best if Scott left the mine in our hands."

"Eh?" I said. "What did Billy do—hit him on the head again?"

"Oh, no. It was his own idea." She smiled at me shyly. "Of course, Billy did mention that there might be certain penalties if it were known that he'd attempted to—er—rub out thirty of Her Majesty's loyal subjects."

"Blackmail!" I gasped.

Tay laughed. "Yes, blackmail, Mr. Wilson."

"But I don't get it," I insisted. "I thought that you and he——"

She leaned towards me. "You're a clever pilot, Peter, but you don't seem to be very——"

Tay failed to finish that sentence. What can a girl say when she's being kissed? THE END

"Hallo! Is that you, Dr. Watson? I've tried giving him his powder in his milk pudding . . ."

## THE GOLDEN FOOL

*Continued from page 21*

the point where the man sat, enormous, on a heavy, clumsy horse with something about him—something in the angle of his sitting—that gave the impression of a centaur, hugely built, unbeautiful, but full of power.

Stopford's pony quickened its pace a little on seeing the other horse. When he was almost abreast of Bezuidenhout he said evenly, "Good morning."

Bezuidenhout said abruptly: "I do not say 'Good morning' to English spies. It's time you were gone. If you do not go, one of these days you will have a bullet through you. That is the message that I bring. It is not my message only, but this is my message—that you leave Lisette alone."

He jerked savagely at the reins and his horse swung round in a single frightened movement. It was as if a statue had come suddenly to life, awkwardly, stiffly, hurriedly. He put the horse at the steep slope beside the path and it went up bending forward tremendously, lunging with its hind quarters. For an instant horse and rider were outlined against the skyline, and then they were gone.

There was no further word. Stopford himself had made no reply at all. The attack had been so sudden, so unexpected. Mockingly, the little valley was full now of an absolute peace.

QUIETLY, in their room, Jonathan talked to Andries. He was lying on his back, his hands underneath his head and his eyes roving about the calico of the ceiling cloth.

"You never put things together, Andries. Why does he stay on here? He knows that Father will not let him have the gold."

"He stays because he promised."

"Promised!" The boy's voice was immensely scornful. "Because he has a plan of his own!" Jonathan raised himself on to one side, propping himself with one hand on the bed. "He's staying here for his own purpose and not for Father's. He's been here four months; that's long enough now, if it were a matter of just seeing how we live, as Father says. He knows that now. Why does he stay?"

"Because he promised Father that he would stay here for six months."

"Promise again!" The whiplash of scorn was infinitely more biting now. "What does he care for promises?"

"That is talking like a Kaffir," said Andries slowly. "If a man gives his word, you must accept it until it is proved that he is breaking it. This is not proof."

"You are a fool and our father is blind! He is blind, I tell you!"

LISETTE was pale, Stopford thought, and she moved listlessly. "We've had visitors here," she said at once.

The anxiety that lived with him responded immediately. It needed so little to awaken it. "Who were they?"

"Two women, Maria Te Water and the wife of Carl Oppenberg."

"And what did they want?"

"They said that I must not love you, Tooni. They said the women here would not let me marry an Englishman."

He was silent.

"And they said if I made myself a whore with an Englishman they would make sure that God punished me."

There were no words, but he tried to find them. "These women—they're not worth even thinking about. I love you, Lisette, and that is all that matters between us, and nothing those women say has any importance."

"When I'm with you I do not mind these things. I'm not afraid. I will try to forget them, but it makes me feel—" She paused for a moment and then said—"unclean." She used the Biblical word with an almost childish reluctance.

"That is because they are unclean. And now you must forget it."

The days passed and the time of the Easter *nagmaal* came. Lisette sat on the wagon-box as she had sat before, but there was no singing and there was no eagerness in her eyes. The whole countryside was dead. In the three months since the Christmas *nagmaal* everything that was green had gone out of it except the olive leaves of the thorn trees. In its dun browns, its yellows and its greys, it was a setting for tragedy.

Stopford went forward to join Lemaire, who was walking ahead alone.

Lemaire said: "It is not too late to turn back, Anthony. I think that I would if I were in your place."

"If I turn back it will be taken for cowardice. There is no choice. I must come." Stopford was thinking not of himself, but of Lisette.

Lemaire walked in silence for a while, then he spoke again. "It is too late to ask you for your promise and to let you go. What I thought of was born out of the peacefulness of our life, and now I cannot ask for a promise under threat."

Stopford was deeply moved. He could feel in the man intolerable depths of pain.

"We will talk to the pastor," said Lemaire wearily.

At the Christmas *nagmaal*, they had come plunging crazily down the rough track that served as a road to the Apies River in a high excitement, with dogs barking and shouted greetings, with people waving to them, with Lisette sitting like a queen receiving homage on the wagon-box and waving back to every hand that waved to her. But now they came down in silence, the wagon itself seeming to lurch more angrily: the greetings were slow, surly, reluctant; they were aimed for Lemaire only, and Lisette sat silent and sad and anxious.

When they turned into the outspan, Stopford saw Jonathan between two of the wagons a little distance away. He had ridden ahead to look for a buck and, it was evident now, for other purposes also. He was talking to three women. Stopford did not recognize any of them. He himself walked quietly and in an outward calm.

They came to their place and the process of outspanning went on almost in silence.

Lisette climbed down and at once came to Stopford to stand by him with an air of anxious defiance.

He smiled at her and said: "There's no need, Lisette. All this is talk. Nothing will come of it. Your father is going to speak to the pastor; perhaps that will help."

She looked at him with a sudden courage and said quickly: "We'll have to be very patient, Tooni."

He made no answer to that but whispered instead, overwhelmed with pity: "I love you so, my Lisette!"

"Then nothing matters," she said, with a momentary return to happiness.

FOUR men came to the fire at dusk; they were all elders. Prinsloo appeared to lead them, and it was clear from the awkwardness and heaviness of their coming that they were a deputation.

Prinsloo said: "We have come for a word with you, Jacques."

Lemaire nodded. "Sit yourselves down!"

Stopford rose to his feet. "If you want to talk I will come back later."

"No," said Prinsloo, "this concerns you, too."

Lemaire passed round his tobacco pouch and there was a long and uncomfortable silence while the pipes were filled.

At length Prinsloo said, turning to Stopford: "This is altogether about you, in fact. It is said that you are a spy for England. Perhaps 'spy' is the wrong word—we are a naked people: there is not much to spy upon. I think perhaps the word would be 'agent.' The people are afraid of you."

He used the words "*Het Volk*," words that had almost a constitutional

## Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 26, the judge pointed out that a person can have "absolute property" in an animal, such as a dog, which is "*mansuetae naturae*"—a domestic animal. This is not lost when the animal strays, so the puppy was still Philip's. But the boy was not so lucky with his other two pets. The wood-pigeon and the field rabbit were animals "*ferae naturae*"—customarily wild or untamed—and if such animals regain their freedom they belong to the person who finds them.

significance. The voice of *Het Volk* was the ultimate arbiter of destinies. "They are afraid because they do not understand what you do here, why you came and for whom you are working. . . ."

Stopford considered the words while Lemaire watched him, and in the end he said awkwardly, fumbling with the Afrikaans: "What do you wish me to do?"

"We think that you should go," answered Prinsloo bluntly and without hesitation. "We think that you should go because we do not want trouble, but we speak for the older men. There are those among the younger men who think that you should not be allowed to go, that it would be better if things were ended—" he paused, considered the choice of his next word with care, and added in a voice that was almost like a sigh—"finally."

"This is madness, Prinsloo!" protested Lemaire.

MINAAR, on the outer edge of the circle, spoke for the first time. "Young men are sometimes not very far removed from madness."

"That is true," agreed Lemaire, "but remember this—that if this man is an emissary of the Cape Government and anything happens to him here, we will not be able to hide it. These things come out always, and if the Cape Government wants a pretext for interference. . . ."

"That we have thought of," said Prinsloo. "We have thought much about this and therefore we wish him to go before it happens."

Stopford had the curious feeling that Prinsloo was in reality friendly towards him.

Lemaire spoke, his voice crisp: "I have kept him here—all else is nonsense! He is not an agent of the government at the Cape, he is not a spy. I have kept him because I wished to keep him, I wished him to help with the farm. Jonathan is busy all the time at his own plans and his own schemes; he is never about the farm. It needs three men—you know that—so I kept Stopford here."

"Jonathan says that you are blind to anything this man does."

Lemaire shook his head. "Jonathan wishes to get rid of him for his own purpose and everything springs from that. He is my son, but—" there was an evident pain in Lemaire's voice—"but he has done this to my house."

Prinsloo drew on his pipe steadily for a minute. When he spoke again his voice was gentle and he spoke very quietly. "It is not a question now of rights or of wrongs, but a question of what is best for the country. I think—we think—that it is best that he should go now."

"No," said Lemaire. "I will not have him forced. He is my guest. Always as a people we have believed in the sacredness of guests."

Minaar, from the other end, said: "It is not a matter of guests. It is a matter of going peacefully or having the young men take the law into their hands."

Lemaire said: "I will not agree to it." It was as if he were battling for his beliefs rather than for Stopford. "Wait until tomorrow at least before you ask him and we will speak to the pastor."

Viljoen, the third member of the deputation, spoke for the first time. "Yes, that is good. Let the pastor decide."

The night became peaceful suddenly. In the farthest corner of the camp an accordion struck up and there was the blurred noise of singing.

After an hour the four men went away. Lemaire rose to his feet and went off to the wagon. Stopford rose with him, but, acting on a sudden decision, strode away from the fire across the outspan. He seemed to walk in an emptiness—no one spoke, no one came near him.

He walked through the outspan up the track that led to the grazing grounds on the hill above. Slowly he rose out of the hot night of the valley. He meditated for an hour.

He had walked as a challenge and the challenge had not been met. Now

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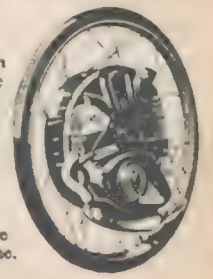

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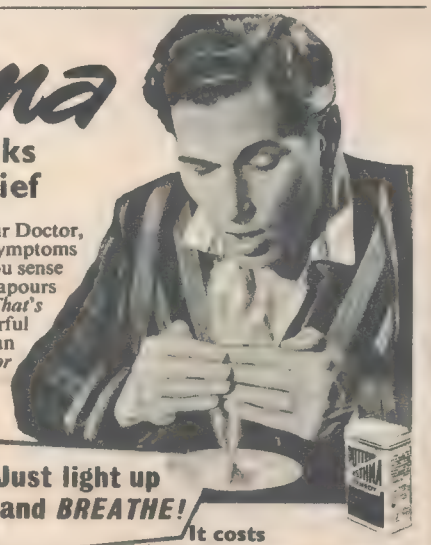

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he returned as a challenge, contemptuous of ambuscade, and again the challenge was not met. He came back into the area of the dying fires in a silence more profound even than that in which he had left. In the hour's thinking on the hillside he had come to no decision.

He was almost back at the wagon now, and his mind still flogged round and round at the tangle, achieving nothing, and then he heard Lisette's voice.

She was standing at the tail of the wagon, her back against the backboard, and she called softly, "Tooni!" He went towards her and held her for a moment lightly by the shoulders. He could see her eyes in the starlight very large and strangely bright. "Tooni," she said, "I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?" he asked gently.

"Afraid for you. I thought that something had happened."

"Nothing will happen," he said. "It's all talk. Nothing will happen."

He drew her to him and she came; suddenly her arms were round him, she pressed herself against him very tightly and he heard her say, so low that he could hardly make out the words: "I am afraid, too, Tooni, of the women." She repeated: "Of the women."

He held her, kissing her forehead gently. After a little he whispered: "You must not be afraid, my darling. Stay by the wagon till the pastor comes. I will try to stay close to it also. There is nothing they can do."

The next morning passed infinitely slowly. Lemaire came back to the wagon a little before noon and sat down heavily in the narrow shade.

Stopford asked quietly: "Is there any news?"

Lemaire spread both his hands in the air, palms downwards. "Nothing that is good. Prinsloo himself will stand with me and perhaps three others—Viljoen also if the pastor speaks for us."

"Would it be easier for you if I saddled a horse and went?"

"It would be," said Lemaire, "but in the end it would solve nothing. It is not you now but my people, and it is not that they are wrong but that they are right in some things only. There are no blacks and whites in this, but there are many shades of grey—too many, I think, for me. You may go if you wish. I do not want it on my conscience that I made you stay, but it will not help me within myself if you go."

"I will not go."

ALONG while after, Lemaire said: "I have wondered if it would not be easier if I were to tell the truth of the gold."

"Good God!" Stopford exclaimed. "At least this talking would not then be a matter of half-truths and lies. What Jonathan has done is my fault, for I am his father."

"Is that perhaps what Jonathan wants?" The words came with a rush. "You have made it impossible for him to get the gold any other way, but if you tell the people as a whole, he is released from your threat—that surely follows. Is this a plan, a plot to force you to that point?" The thing seemed to be unfolding with a quick clarity to him now. Stopford went on: "If you told them, they might still want to kill me to keep the secret, but once you told them there would be nothing to prevent Jonathan going off to register the discoveries at Potchefstroom. Is that what he plans?"

Lemaire was silent under the avalanche of words. After a long while he said very slowly: "He was my son. It may be that you are right."

September, the *voorloper*, was lying stretched in the shade of a bush by the wagon. Lemaire called him. "Where is Baas Jonathan's horse?"

"In the little *kloof* beside the main road," answered the boy at once.

"Loose?"

"Tethered to a halter with the grey stallion belonging to Baas François," said September. "Do you wish them here?"

"No," said Lemaire shortly, "leave them." He looked at Stopford but did not speak.

Stopford said heavily: "He knows the place exactly, he has the samples, he knows the procedure. No one else could overtake him."

Lemaire said sorrowfully again: "He was my son."

PASTOR CELLIERS came late in the afternoon. The people came from their wagons to watch him drive in. Stopford felt no excitement. His whole being was drained by the tensions of the long, hot hours, each hour longer than the last, so that the hot, late minutes of the afternoon dragged like the slow feet of exhausted oxen.

Prinsloo had said that he would send for them when the pastor was ready, and they waited in the shade, Lemaire and himself, and Lisette sat alone on the wagon. Andries came to them hesitantly to sit a little way away on the wagon-box. There was no sign of Jonathan.

Viljoen came for them so late that it was almost upon the edge of dusk. "The *predikant* is ready now."

Celliers sat on a box between two wagons and on them and about them were crowded the old men and the young. There were no women. The place had acquired the setting, the shape, the stature of a court, and Celliers had everything but the robes of a judge.

There was a silence when they came and Celliers spoke first. Turning to Lemaire, he asked: "What is this that they tell me, my son?"

Quietly, Lemaire answered: "I do not know what it is that they have told you, but whatever it is I am certain that it is wrong, for everything about this quarrel is wrong."

"They say—" Celliers's voice was literal, humourless—"they say that this man is an agent of the Cape Government, of the English, and that he is here to let the government in."

"And I say that that is nonsense," said Lemaire, his voice still quiet and steady. "This man came from England less than a year ago. He spent ten days only at the Cape, he spent hardly more at Port Natal; then he came here. He has nothing to

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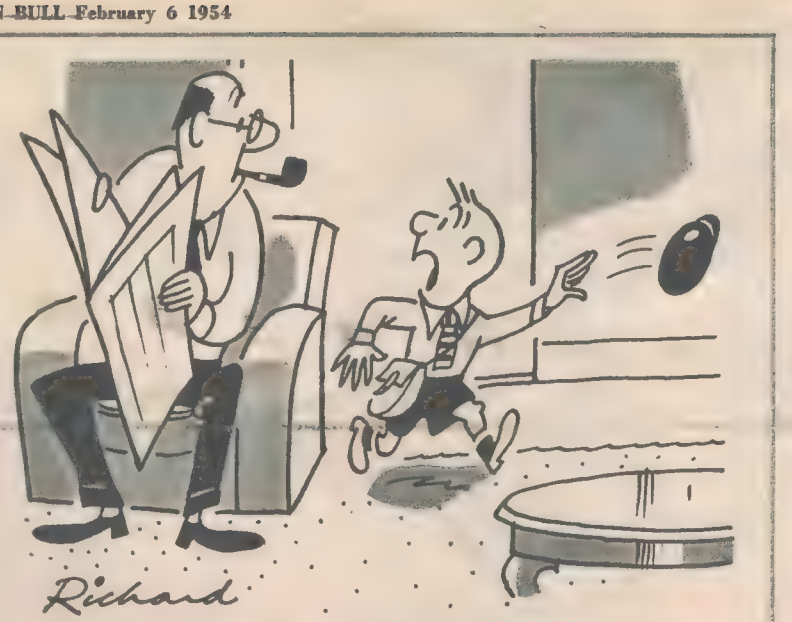
*IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK*




"I'm fed up—they've put me up into the next form where everything's harder"

connect him with the Cape Government."

"England—the Cape Government—what does it matter? The trouble is the same. If he did not come for that, why did he come?"

"He came because this is a new land and England is getting full of people, and there was opportunity here—he thought." The last words were bitter in thei tone.

"There is room still for Englishmen at the Cape or in Natal," said Celliers. "Why did he come here?"

Lemaire looked among the men for Jonathan and found him in a far corner, but he answered: "Is there any law of the republic which says that he should not come? We want men here and he is young."

"Why did he come to your farm? It is not on the road from Natal."

"He is a stranger. He did not know the country."

The drift of the questioning was clear now. More than ever Lemaire was certain of Jonathan's stratagem.

Celliers said suddenly, conversationally almost, dropping the sharpness of his questioning, "There is some mystery here. Why did he come to your farm? Why did you keep him here? You have two sons. It is enough for your farm. You have plenty of Kaffirs. There must be some reason."

"I kept him," replied Lemaire steadily, "first because he was ill, then because I liked him, because he was useful to me, because Jonathan, my younger son, is always going after some new thing. He is very young. These last four months he has been away half his time. I needed help. Moreover, this man builds dams and walls. Why should I not keep him? Is there any law against it?"

"Law! Law!" said Bezuidenhout at the back of the crowd, his deep voice rumbling.

THE pastor went on: "There may not be a law, but there may be the needs of the people. Why do you keep him in the face of the feeling of the whole country?"

"It is not the feeling of the *whole* country," declared Lemaire sternly. "It is only the people about here. It started with the van Blercks—Jonathan took it there. It spread to the Bezuidenhouts—Jonathan took it. This thing is not the feeling of the countryside. It is a feeling imposed upon the countryside."

"You stand for this man against your own son?" exclaimed Celliers. A ripple of harsh protest ran through the crowd.

"He was a stranger within my gates," said Lemaire, the anger out of his voice. "I found him when he was sick and I took him in. Must I now betray him? Where does it say that in the Bible?"

"It says: 'Are not his servants come unto thee for to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land?'" The old man was angry now. Clearly he resented Lemaire's lapse into a Biblical turn of phrase. "There is a mystery here," he said again. "What is it? Why did this man come? Why do you stand for him against your own son?"

Again the ripple of protest went through the crowd, fiercer this time.

Stopford looked up at the pastor and spoke for the first time. "I came because this was a new place and I am a young man. In England I lived in the countryside and I could not live in a town here. Was there any reason why I should not come? Is there any reason why I should not stay? I have worked while I have been here. Lemaire will tell you if I have earned my food. It is as simple as that."

"You have earned your food," said Lemaire, "and more."

Celliers sat back, fumbling one nostril between finger and thumb.

SUDDENLY in the distance there was a noise of women shouting, the high, shrill voices of quarrelling. Stopford lifted his head. He could hear, repeated over and over again, words whose meaning he could not understand. The men in the crowd were listening. There was a quick blurt of words. He saw Celliers lift his head in turn and listen. And then, over the shrieks, he heard a single despairing call—Lisette's voice calling his name.

Blindly he thrust his way between the wagons and between the older men and they opened to let him past, with Lemaire close behind him; and, clear of them, he began to run towards the sound. It was moving. He could see beyond the farthest wagons a knot of women, arms whirling, shouting, bonnets fallen to the ground. He was running as fast as he could, but already they were almost at the river's bank.

He was very close to them now, and still it was impossible to see what was happening. It was like a tight mêlée in the middle of a battle, the point of hardest fighting — close-knit, shape-changing, furious and shrill. It was plain that they had Lisette in their midst, that they were struggling, thrusting at her, tearing at her.

A woman who had fallen behind turned and clawed at his face, and he felt the skin tear and the quick rush of blood. He was surrounded by five of them and stopped, but he broke clear, feeling the softness of women's flesh as he pushed them away, hearing their high, shrill cursing. They were hysterical, animal, insane.

As he broke free of the other women, the main crowd reached the bank and he saw Lisette thrust away from them. He heard their voices calling: "Whore! Harlot! Rahab, Jezebel!" He heard other words, screeched obscenities.

There was a feeling of insanity in

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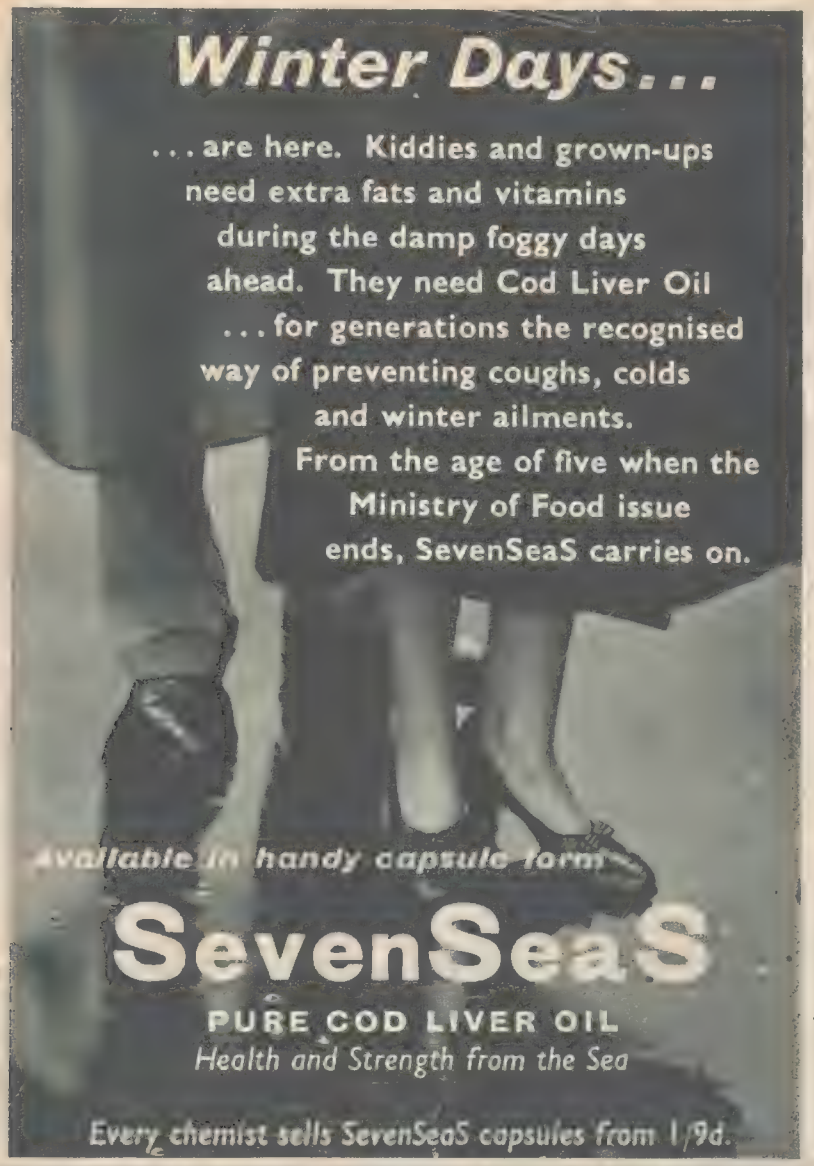
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## RESULTS OF "FITTING PHRASES" COMPETITIONS

*John Bull*
*December 26, 1953*

**SECTION 1.**

Best entries were those bearing phrases allocated thus:

A6, B5, C7, D4, E8, F3, G2, H1

For these entries the following 3 readers share the prize of £50:

H. Farrow, Willington, Co. Durham.
D. A. Clarke (Mrs.), Brightside, Sheffield.
J. M. Burchell, Corsham.

**SECTION 2.**

Best entry was that bearing phrases allocated thus:

A5, B4, C8, D3, E7, F2, G1, H6

and the prize of £50 is won by

M. Kitts, Kingston, Surrey.

*WINNERS HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED AND CHEQUES HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED*

the air. Two of the women had been ripped so that they were half-naked in the dusk; their hair was streaming, maenad, witch-like.

As he reached them, the leading women pushed Lisette and she balanced for a single agonizing instant on the bank and fell.

Behind with Lemaire a woman was sobbing: "We meant only to wash her in the river! We meant only to wash her!"

Behind them again the men were running up, Celliers with them, but Stopford had gone through the women already and jumped. Lisette was lying face-downward in the water. The pool was very shallow, there was no depth in it to break her fall. His arms were round her instantly as he recovered his balance, and, stooping, he lifted her very gently and she turned, half-conscious, and hid herself against his shoulder.

Other men had joined him now and together they helped him up a low place on the bank farther down the stream.

He came back, carrying her, into a strange silence. The women were standing almost as they had been when Lisette was thrust over the bank. They were dishevelled, their hair streaming, their clothing torn, and as he came he heard Celliers's voice, stern and deep, say: "Cover your breasts, women, and go back to your wagons! You have today disgraced your people."

Again he heard the voice of the woman who had called to Lemaire, as she said: "We only meant to wash her in the river."

He looked down at Lisette again. In his arms she looked infinitely small and helpless; her clothing was ripped and her shoulders were scratched and bleeding. He said, his voice raw and very angry: "If you have killed her I will call your own Bible to witness against you!"

From the background a woman said defiantly: "She was a whore with you and we punished her for that!"

"You are a liar and a murderess," he answered harshly, "and that you will remember for your life!"

Another woman said: "She came out of your room at two o'clock in the morning when the van Blercks were at the farm."

"Is that true?" asked Celliers.

"She came to my room," said Stopford very slowly, "to warn me of a plot between her brother Jonathan and the van Blercks. It is her brother who has made this foulness."

The woman who had cried before, called: "It is true. It was her brother."

"What am I to say? What am I to say?" murmured Celliers confusedly, and Stopford went forward, carrying Lisette towards the wagon.

It was Lemaire who turned to the crowd as it began to follow them and said: "You have done enough. Now go! There is nothing more that you can do."

A woman's voice said, quite gently—and by its gentleness was in its contrast a part of the horror of the whole thing: "She will want a woman to help her."

Lemaire said very quietly, while they waited upon his words: "She will never want a woman again in all her life. Go now!" And turning, he strode after Stopford and the girl.

They put her down by the wagon on a leopard-skin *kaross* that Lemaire snatched hastily from the *kartel*, the rawhide bed, and faces watched them from very far away, vaguely seen, disembodied. One shoulder was clawed with deep scratches and there were red marks that would be bruises on her neck and on her ribs under the pathetic young breasts; there was a red mark on the side of her cheek that ran up from the cheek-bone across the temple: but it was clear that she was conscious.

She looked up at Stopford after a moment, her eyes opening. When she spoke her voice was soft, unclear. "I knew you would come."

He said passionately: "I came as soon as I heard you. They will not hurt you now—there is nothing that they can do."

Lemaire had brought a pillow and a sheet. Between them they slipped the rest of her wet clothing from her. Lemaire, with quick, strangely gentle hands, felt over her where the bruises showed and said shortly: "No bones are broken, I think. Does it hurt badly anywhere, Lisette?"

She answered softly: "No, it's all right."

They covered her with a sheet and a blanket on top of that. Lemaire fetched warm water and they sponged her shoulder; then he rummaged in the wagon-box for the medicine-chest and brought out ointment. When he looked up from the box with the pot in his hand, Andries was standing mute in front of him. He smiled at him gravely.

Andries asked: "Is it bad?"

"No, she is conscious again."

Andries said: "Tant' Wilhelmina asked. . . ."

Lemaire shook his head. "No, she will not want women, I think. Tell Tant' Wilhelmina we will manage!"

Lemaire and Stopford worked quickly, gently, and all the time Lisette lay there watching them, not speaking. When they had finished Lemaire said: "She will be better on the *kartel*."

They lifted her in the *kaross*, Stopford climbing into the wagon to take her from Lemaire. When he had straightened the fur of the *kaross* and arranged the blankets he felt her hand come out and take his.

"Stay with me, Tooni!" she murmured.

"Yes, I will stay with you, Lisette, always." He felt her hand tighten on his.

The outspan was utterly silent in the early darkness. Even the children conformed to the brooding anxiety that seemed to compass it now. Out of the silence Celliers came towards the Lemaire wagon, outlined against the glow of the farther fires. Lemaire rose to meet him.

Celliers said without preamble: "I will not preach the sermon that I meant to preach. Tomorrow I shall take a text from John—the eighth chapter, the seventh verse."

From the storage of his memory Lemaire said: "'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.'"

"'He that is without sin . . .'" repeated Celliers heavily. "This I would not have thought possible. There is a horror in it when women lose their restraint. I think that God cannot be pleased with us this night—I think that He cannot be pleased with me; I am their shepherd." The arrogance, the consciousness of power was gone out of his voice: there was nothing in him now of the judge; he was for the moment only an old man who had failed. He murmured almost plaintively: "It was not Christian. It was not Christian."

Lemaire stood silently in front of him, watching him, and after a while the old man lifted his head and asked: "Is she hurt badly?"

"In her body, no—but I cannot tell what will happen in her mind. Can you?"

"The minds of the young have a great resilience," replied Celliers. "It is we who are old who feel the weight of these things. I have prayed for her. I think God will listen." He added suddenly and strangely—and it was like the breaking down of the whole of the man's defences: "He must! He must!"

"It is good of you to have prayed," observed Lemaire distantly. "She is asleep now."

There was another silence. At length Celliers said: "I have come to tell you also that we have talked this thing over again, this matter of the Englishman."

"And?"

"The voice of the meeting was that he need not go."

"And what was the meeting?"

Celliers was silent.

Lemaire went on: "Prinsloo and the older men—is that right?"

"Yes," admitted Celliers, with a

"One only"

touch of bitterness in his voice, "that is right."

"And where were the young men?" Lemaire asked.

"I do not know." Celliers's tone was almost humble. "That I do not know. . . . You will tell him what I have told you?"

"He has heard already, I have no doubt," said Lemaire, glancing half-consciously towards the wagon-tail. "For the rest, he will make his own mind up. Whatever you had decided he would have made his own mind up."

"You will make sure that he knows," Celliers persisted, and turning, walked away into the darkness.

JACOBUS BEZUIDENHOUT said: "Celliers went to tell them. What do we do now?"

Sarel, the son of Prinsloo, said: "Whatever he told them, we were not at the meeting. It has nothing to do with us. We still do what we think right."

François Malan turned to Jonathan. "What do you say?"

Jonathan shrugged his shoulders. "If the old men have spoken. . . ."

Instantly there was a spate of protest.

Then a single voice came clear: "What has it to do with the old men? This is a matter for *Het Volk*! This is a matter for all the people—for us as well as the old men. Who are the old men that they should decide everything?"

Again Jonathan shrugged his shoulders. Again the spate of words ironed out individual voices.

When it had subsided, François Malan asked once more: "What do you think, Jonathan? After all, you must speak! Most of this is your plan."

"Nothing of this is my plan!" retorted Jonathan. "How could I tell what the women would do?"

The youngest of the Prinsloo boys said: "You talked to enough of them during the day!"

"I always talk to women. How could I tell that they would go mad like this? And what has it to do with us anyway? The thing is simple. The Englishman has a secret. Are you going to let him go before he tells it or are you going to let him stay without telling it because old Celliers was angry with the women?"

Somebody asked: "Shall we go and drag him out now? Where is he?"

A voice said: "He is still at the wagon, sitting under the tilt alongside—" he seemed reluctant somehow to use the name and added only, after a brief pause, "alongside her."

"If we drag him out now, we will have Celliers down on us tomorrow as well as the women," said François Malan. "If we leave him now we can do nothing tomorrow."

"Why? What do you think Celliers would say?" said Jonathan. "It can wait. Tomorrow Celliers will tell the women what he thinks of them—and me also perhaps. I do not care." Some of the younger men looked at him oddly. "My eye doesn't see things the same way as Celliers's and"—there was the very slightest hint of uneasiness in the defiance in Jonathan's tone—"I will go on doing things in my own way. On Monday there is time, on Monday morning early. We will talk more of this tomorrow. There is a secret and we must know it."

* * *

The fire was very low, a hint of rose in the nearer ashes and a small heart of incandescence in the centre. There was a faint drift of wind from the north and Lemaire and Stopford sat clear of the thin incense of the fumes. Lisette was sleeping naturally now. It seemed quite certain that there was no major damage anywhere in the slight body; even the bruise on the head seemed unimportant.

A messenger came and asked, soft-voiced, for Lemaire, an old man whom Stopford did not remember seeing previously. He looked bent in the starlight. Lemaire got up, unwilling and hesitant; then he walked over to where one of the Hottentots lay sleeping and said, as he woke the boy with his foot: "Make up the fire!" He strode off, ignoring the messenger.

STOPFORD left the fire and went to stand at the tail of the wagon, looking down on Lisette's face. He was there for a long time while the shuffling of the boy to and fro preceded an increasing light until there was a blaze that lit the inside of the canvas, and in its brightness he saw Lisette wake, and heard her say at once: "Tooni!"

He answered: "I'm here. It's all right, Lisette."

As her hand came out from underneath the blanket he put his own hand over it and waited. She was silent for a long while. The fire danced on the canvas and died down, woke and died again. He could hear the thin snapping of the flames and the fall of coals; beyond that again, night birds; and beyond them, a dog very far down the valley; and beyond the dog, jackals.

She said at last: "I think it will be best if we go now."

"Go where?" he asked, startled.

"Anywhere. Does it matter?" He was silent, not quite comprehending her, and she said again quite reasonably and without rancour: "That will be best. It will not take very long."

"You mean back to the farm?"

"Oh, no! Even that would be no


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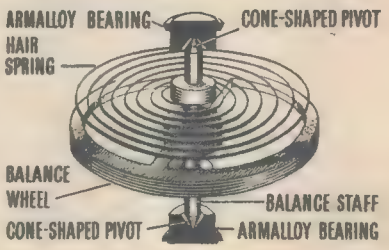


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good now. We must go away for ever."

She sat up suddenly and without awkwardness, and the firelight seemed to cling to her like a golden rain. For Stopford there was a moment of exquisite beauty, so revealing, so poignant, that his heart twisted at the sadness that lay behind it. She was alive again, the litheness was in her body once more as she sat on the *kartel*, her back very straight; the curve of her shoulders and her throat, the pointed double curves of her breasts, the arching of the ribs all etched and beautiful in the softness of the light. There was no coquetry even as there was no false modesty; only an ultimate, trusting frankness.

She said: "If I were to see them in the morning I would die, I think."

A dry branch fell into the heart of the fire and there was a swift intensification of the light. He saw in her eyes fear and hurt and wonder, and he said soberly: "Yes, we will go, Lisette." He was not sure if he meant it. He was sure only that there was nothing that he could refuse her while that hurt was in her eyes.

"You must get my clothes for me, Tooni, in the wagon-box. They are all together, my Sunday clothes."

Obediently, he went over to the box. They were folded neatly on top of the other things within the box and he brought them to her, and she stood up under the tilt and began to dress, and it seemed as if the light of the fire died with her dressing.

When she was done, he helped her down. She came to the ground lightly with her arms round his neck and they stood close together for an instant. He asked: "You would not rather wait until the bruises. . . ?"

"They do not matter. I was not hurt—or only a little. Get the saddle-bags now! I'll pack what we need. There's plenty here. You have enough ammunition?"

"No, I'll take more and some powder."

"You have your compass?"

"Yes," he answered.

"And the maps?"

"I brought them with me, but they're not very good."

"Still, they're maps," she said.

THE sorrowfulness had gone out of her voice now. She was practical with the hard training of the frontiers. They were going on a journey, therefore there were certain necessities, and the elemental law of the unsettled places ruled those necessities. She selected, set aside; packed quickly, efficiently, discarding things with sure judgment.

Stopford watched her, leaving these things to her, and in a little, perhaps not more than ten minutes, she said: "It is ready now."

"We must wait for your father."

"No," she said, "not even for him. We must go, Tooni."

"I can't leave him like this," Stopford protested. "I have come to love your father, Lisette."

She said only: "I could not see even him now."

"Then I'll write to him."

He found a leaf from the back of a book in the wagon-box, Lisette gave him a pencil, and he wrote on it quickly and boldly:

*"We are going now. I think that this is best. You need not have any more fear of what I found. I am sorry only to leave you."*

He signed it "Anthony," folded it twice, wrote across it "Jacques Lemaire" and put it inside the Bible on the pillow of Lisette's bed. Lemaire would find it there.

When he had finished she said: "We'll carry the saddles and September will come with us to catch the horses."

"No," said Stopford, and grinned wryly. "Jonathan's horse and François Malan's are tethered up the road. We'll take them."

They picked up the saddles, heavy with the laden bags, and walked into the night. Lisette did not look back. September was asleep again.

*To be continued next week*

## RAMPS DOWN!

*Continued from page 9*

belonged to his own unit, pay day was a nightmare of acquittance rolls.

The lessons of Dieppe were apparently the subject of fairly animated discussions at the War Office meanwhile. In the spring of 1943 we were moved down to Falmouth where, after a week or so of normal training, we were told to carry out an experimental exercise to prove that a force of men could, in fact, be landed on a coast so rocky that it would be undefended. There were many such areas on the coasts of enemy-occupied territory, just as there were also on our own.

If such a landing could be achieved, it might be possible to put ashore a whole Commando brigade, which could attack and clear a port from the landward side, holding it until the main force could land.

The area selected for the experiment was near St. Ives, where rocky cliffs rise sheer from the Atlantic surf to a height of about four hundred feet, then flatten on to a scrub-covered plateau criss-crossed by stone dykes.

David Style, whose troop had specialized in climbing and had already done a good deal of training in that particular area, was made responsible for getting everyone up and down the rocky cliffs in the preliminary exercises.

### Going Down Was Worst

We approached the thing from the top to start with, using guide-ropes. Most of us found the descent much worse than the upward climb, and the sight of the whirling surf seething round the rocks far below was anything but attractive. We did, however, reach the bottom without mishap, and those of us who had not been dizzy on the way down were shaken on looking up, where the clouds scudding across the towering crags gave the impression that the whole mass was swaying forward, inducing in us an almost overwhelming desire to sway back with it.

Once down, we had to climb up again, then the whole process had to be repeated over and over again, till the ascent and descent had been mastered. Then we did it by groups and subsections, the formations we would use on landing. Finally, we carried weapons and ammunition, and that part of the training was completed.

Though most of us became at least comparatively safe on the rock, I found in my own section that the unlikeliest men seemed to be in their element. Donkin and McVeigh, who, as old soldiers loathed most forms of exercise, and who lagged complainingly through every route march, went up and down the rock-face as though they were walking along the street, and enjoyed every minute of it, while many of the more athletic men hated every second that they sweated out on the unsympathetic stone.

### Death At Rehearsal

Then came the shattering news that the navy, which considered that a landing was impossible, had refused to risk its craft and would therefore send none. But Lord Lovat, the C.O., sent for some Goatley boats, which are collapsible, flat-bottomed things operated by about a dozen men kneeling and wielding the paddles. They are normally used in river and canal crossings.

On the final rehearsal, the night before the exercise proper, we all embarked at St. Ives in tank-landing craft, with the Goatley boats on board. There was an eighteen-foot swell on the Atlantic, which rolled and slumped rather unpleasantly against the foot of the cliff face.

It was a very difficult task to launch the Goatleys, but we managed it, and began the slow tortuous journey towards the cliffs. At times the paddle-blades were completely submerged, at times they struck wildly at air, so heavy was the swell. The rescue launch which the navy had thoughtfully provided stayed about three hundred yards out. The surf at the rock base looked terrifying, and when the first man leaped ashore with the rope to secure the craft, he slipped. The craft was whisked out, thrown in the air as the next wave met it, and overturned. Two men were lost.

Next day, the swell had died somewhat, and we carried out the exercise successfully before the representatives of the War Office and the Admiralty, who stood in groups at the top of the cliff.

Throughout 1943, we moved up and down the country. Mountain training. Landing training. Forest training. No action for the unit as a whole, though "D" troop became operational on small-scale dory raids in the winter.

By the beginning of 1944, however, the Second Front was in the air. There was talk of it in the press, there was talk of it in the pubs. Shortly afterwards there was talk of it from Montgomery himself. One bitterly cold morning in February he inspected, at Hove, the whole 1st Special Service Brigade, consisting of 3, 4 and 6 Commandos and No. 45 Royal Marine Commando.

### Soon Now, Said Monty

He warned us that, some time in the none-too-distant future, the thing the newspapers were calling the Second Front would undoubtedly be opened. That would be when he was ready. The next move would be the decisive one, which would finally rout the German Army and finish the whole thing off. He wished us luck.

From then on, training took a more definite shape. We moved to Bexhill, where the whole Commando could be concentrated in the one town. Every morning, each troop started in battle order on a seven-mile sprint march to the training area. That took fifty minutes. Once there, we formed up in operational order — by subsections, with troop H.Q. between the two sections—and began to march. On the march we crossed obstacles, attacked trees and haystacks, worked out set battle-drills.

After a break at midday, we repeated the process, except that senior ranks were gradually eliminated, the next senior taking over, until every man could take over the entire troop, if necessary, at a moment's notice.

Two or three weeks of this, then we embarked in the two ships that were later to ferry us across on the morning of D-Day—the Princess Astrid and the Maid of Orleans. Each of these carried eight landing-craft.

It was April, 1944, when we returned to Bexhill. We were ready for the final phase of the training. The whole Commando was fit, if a little weary by the end of the day. Even Peter's gramophone was silent in the evenings now.

Peter Mercer-Wilson was a regular soldier, who had been commissioned in the Royal Artillery just before the war. His young brother had been killed on the Royal Oak, and Peter had felt that the war had become a more personal affair. He had seen little chance of early action with his own unit, and had, after months of wangling, got posted to the Commando.

For a time he was with "B" troop, then, after the raid at Boulogne, he had become administrative officer, but had relinquished the third pip to come to "F" troop when he thought action seemed imminent. He had one section, I had the other.

### Those Huge Rucksacks . . .

Now we were issued with steel-framed rucksacks. Into these we crammed everything which might be used in a fortnight, plus a hundred rounds of .303, one three-inch mortar bomb, one pick and shovel, and extra Bren magazines. As we already wore a bandolier and toggle rope, and carried a rifle or tommy-gun, the load was about ninety-five pounds.

In addition, some men had to carry pole charges, others Bangalore torpedoes—long metal tubes filled with explosive, used for blowing a gap in wire or for ramming into a pillbox. Some, instead of the rucksack, carried a flame-thrower.

Our total strength was now about six hundred men, including two French troops, all of whom staggered out day after day in operational order till we grew sick of the sight of the enormous rucksacks, which were now never unpacked.

May arrived. Training eased. We

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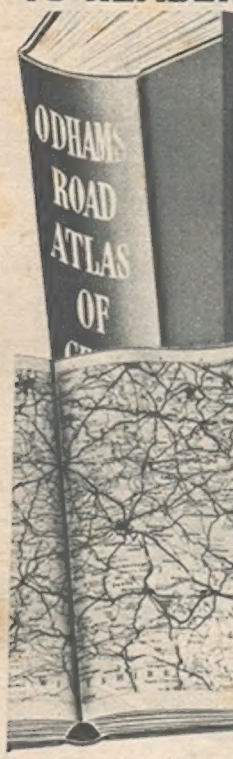


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## OH, JOHNNY! by TIM

practised rapid movement through streets, over walls and through built-up areas, in which it is always difficult to maintain a steady rate of advance.

The inhabitants of the town were at first amused, and then sometimes annoyed, to see the Commando troops dashing along streets, then swarming over walls, through deserted houses, across gardens and back on to the original line of advance. We also made contact with the 6th Airborne Division, with whom we stayed at Bulford for a few days of inter-unit boxing and football.

### McVeigh Takes A Stripe

Everyone by now felt that time was running short. We had checked all the kit and equipment, re-checked it, then re-checked it again.

Inside the troop, we checked on each section, subsection and group within the subsection. We appointed new n.c.o.s. It was then that Len sent for McVeigh, who had always steadfastly refused promotion.

"Look here, McVeigh, we want you to take a stripe. Now I know you've always refused before, but I should think it's fairly obvious that we're getting near something big now, and it's up to every man who's got it in him to do his damnedest. Whether you like it or not, you're a man who's got influence in the troop, and so it's up to you to use that influence with and not against your n.c.o.s and, incidentally, your officers."

The little black eyes flickered in the square face. He was standing stiffly to attention. "May I speak to you, kind of man to man like?" Len nodded. The stiff figure relaxed. "Well, look here, sir, you know how I feel about stripes—I've had them before, but they've never been worth the bloody trouble. Now we've got a good troop here, so if you want me to take a stripe I'll do it, sir, but just let me make one condition—that if we're not in action inside of six weeks I can turn the bloody things in again!"

Len grinned. "I don't normally accept conditions, McVeigh," he said, "but this time I'll take you on that."

Tension grew as the days went on. The weather was perfect, training was over. All we knew was that we were to land somewhere, dash through a town, cross an anti-tank ditch to attack a battery, then go flat out inland to link with the Airborne, some of whom would have dropped before the sea landing.

It was difficult to fill in the days. Writing normal letters home became increasingly hard. In the evenings we drank.

On May 23 a move order was issued; the Commando would parade with operational kit the next morning at 05.30 hours at the station. The destination was Southampton, where we were taken to a huge tented camp. We settled down to wait.

The first day or two in camp passed with lectures by Doc Patterson on how to inject morphia, what to do if and when wounded, and general first aid. He was immensely cheerful, but depressed us all. When we began briefing, however, we had plenty to keep our minds occupied.

The Brigade was to be the extreme left flank of the whole invasion. No. 4 Commando would land first just after low tide (so that any beached craft would be floated off the beach) and would cross the three hundred yards of beach. We would re-form in an assembly area of demolished houses before moving into the town, where we would dump our rucksacks and attack a battery covering the landing beaches.

The rest of the Brigade would, in the meantime, push inland to link with the paratroops and glider troops of the 6th Airborne, who would be holding two vital bridges. We in No. 4 would tag on behind the others after we had dealt with the battery. Once across the bridges, we would come under the Airborne command and with them would hold a bridgehead.

### Weather Breaks Down

The next few days passed in a maze of photographs and models of the area. We studied the photographs of the battery with avid interest. We saw the six gunpits, the anti-tank ditch—believed to be mined—and we saw a white square in the middle of the battery itself. This was a large white tower, about sixty feet high, but we were assured that it would be white rubble when we got there. We worked on the photographs till every man knew exactly what he and every other man in the troop, in the Commando, and in the Brigade, was to do.

On the last day of May we embarked in the Astrid and the Maid of Orleans. The weather was still fine. Lord Lovat came aboard and wished us happy landings. But the first few days of June, which we spent in Southampton Water, brought a deterioration in the weather. The skies were flecked with clouds, the wind freshened, white horses showed on a grey sea.

A whisper of doubt ran round the ship. Peter and I stood leaning on the rail, looking at the armada of ships all around us. "Surely they can't put it off now, it's gone too far," he muttered. I shook my head. I felt committed somehow to an enterprise which might be too big for all of us.

"They'll not call it off now," I said.

Len joined us. "It's on," he said. We turned towards him. He glanced at his watch. "Skipper's to make an announcement in about ten minutes, he said. "The bar's open, so we've just got time for a drink first." He paused for a moment and gazed out

across the water. The sun's last rays were giving way to midsummer gloaming; the world seemed to be holding its breath. "With a bit of wangling," said Len, "I might have been in the N.F.S. in Newcastle."

Peter laughed and chanted: "It serves you right, you shouldn't have joined, it serves you right!" We moved towards the bar. . . .

Reveille on the morning of June 6, 1944, was at 03.30 hours. In the officers' mess on board the Astrid we were plied with bacon, eggs, toast and coffee—a magnificent meal.

As I sat down at the table, I felt a strange tightening of the stomach muscles. The others, I think, were suffering the same way, but we still managed to do justice to the meal.

### Destroyer Torpedoed

Dawn was breaking grey over the sea. It was cold and unpleasant. In the few minutes before "Boat Stations," most of the men were looking eagerly about and talking excitedly. In the midst of all this, there was a loud explosion on the port quarter and, in a lurid orange glow, one of the escorting destroyers broke in two. We later learned that she had been struck by a torpedo. It was the most depressing sight imaginable. The two halves of the stricken ship reared out of the water like an inverted V and sank slowly into the leaden sea.

The order to take up boat stations came as a welcome alternative to watching, and in silence we fell in on board. As each craft was filled, it swung outboard into a twenty-foot swell, to pitch and toss a stone's throw from the parent ship while the others were lowered away.

On the run in, it was impossible not to be thrilled by the happenings round about. Aircraft darted to and fro in the lightening sky above, all with a mission, all independent, and all beautifully ours. Shells from the Warspite and Ramillies were screaming overhead, destroyers fired salvo after salvo, and soon we heard a new sound—the roaring swishing of the missiles from the rocket ships. The whole coastline was now under a thick pall of black heavy smoke.

### Panic—Then Confidence

In the landing craft, most of us were sick as dogs. In my own assault craft, I looked to where the shore loomed nearer. I could see the stakes and obstacles now. Two hundred yards to go. The barrage would be lifting by this time, but the noise seemed much the same. I looked round the boat. Thirty-two pairs of eyes seemed to be fixed upon me. Panic seized me. My mouth was dry. God, don't let me do anything idiotic. Please let me seem normal.

I glanced round at the faces I knew so well. Notman, ginger-haired, dour, sitting nursing the nozzle of his flame-thrower; young Kavanagh, at eighteen the youngest member of the troop, a fresh-faced, clear-eyed boy from Dublin; the stocky, compact figure of the sergeant-major. Confidence surged up in me. I looked across at our other craft, and saw Len and Peter give thumbs-up through the spray. As I turned back, McVeigh, who was in the Bren-gunner's place beside me, turned a green face towards me and groaned. I felt cheered. Someone was in worse shape than myself.

Fifty yards to go. I looked at Trevor Hansell, R.N.V.R., who nodded and said: "Any time now." I shouted: "Prepare to land!" The obstacles loomed up all around. There seemed a lot of noise still. Dimly I realized it was no longer our barrage, but their counter-fire trying to hit the craft as they came in. Thirty yards to go. . . . Twenty. . . . "Ramps down!"

There was an almighty crash under the ramp and a spout of water as a mortar bomb exploded. The craft shuddered. the ramp stuck. I kicked at it and it dropped. . . .

*NEXT WEEK: The beach defences crack—and the battle of the ivory tower begins. The book version of "Ramps Down!", entitled "Swiftly They Struck," will be published on April 26 by Odhams Press Ltd. at 12s. 6d.*


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The Strike Epidemic
Love In A Cottage
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The Right Material
Another Accident
The Parson's Problem
Running Away
Clothed And Fed
With A Deafening Roar
All He Has
Slave To Ambition
Lost Count Of
Soft Lights, Sweet Music
On The Defensive
Glittering
Not To Be Trifled With

**Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions**

Leader Of The.....
On Mother's .....
.....The Table
However It's .....
Those Shocking.....
When The.....Appeared

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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross / & Co. /, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of these Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated March 6, and in JOHN BULL dated March 13), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, February 27, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,923 result.)

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### This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two, three* or *four* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

**Across Clues** XWORD 869
1. Our farmers do this better than they used to do as a rule
3. Work is made less smooth by cross-grained this
6. A baby is this to great many married couples
8. It is supposed average woman likes one
11. One occasionally goes the wrong way
13. May be old, yet still fetch a substantial sum
14. There's something cheering about
15. Student of architecture may get one or two useful tips from

**Down Clues**
1. Although plain, may be pleasing to the eye
2. Education is likely to raise them higher
4. One of frightened animals may finally be driven into some very restricted area
5. In rough weather sailors in open boat may be very glad of
7. Give one the right kind of stick and see how it responds
9. If you can't do it gracefully don't do it at all
10. If this is spoken of as "north one," you've some idea what it will be like
12. Hunting gentry often suffer from

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£25: Mrs. M. Nelson, 27 Rossie Place, Edinburgh: WHAT WE ALL WANT—PROSPERITY'S "CAKE"—*With* ELEVENSES!

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### XWORD 864 RESULT

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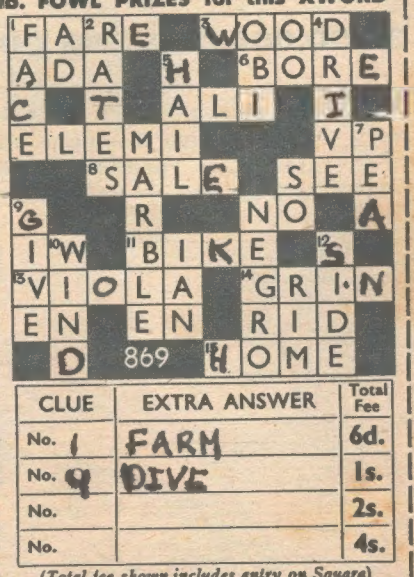
In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Extra Answers to two Clues=4 Squares, 1s.; to three Clues =8 Squares, 2s.; to four Clues=16 Squares, 4s.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated February 27.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry equal to 16 Squares. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

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